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PROTOCULTURE ADDICTS

16

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1992

- RECORD OF LODOSS WAR
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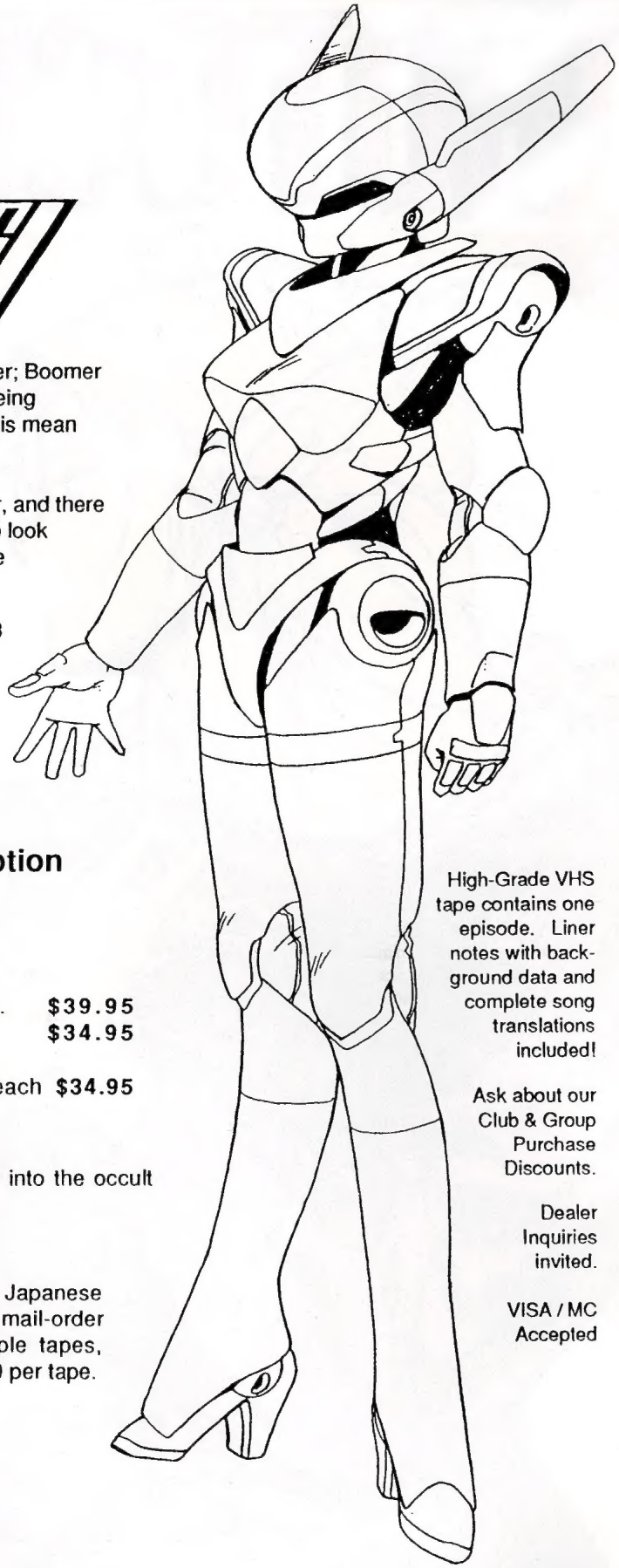

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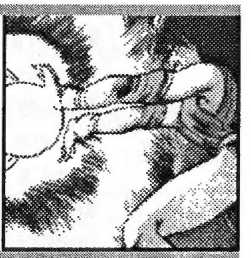

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FANTASY FOR A FUTURE

by Claude J. Pelletier

EDITORIAL

First of all, I want to wish everybody a good year for 1992. Let's be optimistic and hope that the world won't fall apart around us. Maybe we should let the darkness fall and rebuild the world according to our own dreams. Lets not try to fix up the obsolete and shattered dreams of our fathers. We need a lot of courage and determination to not lose hope at the sight of this ecological, economical, ideological, and political mess that constitutes our future. A disposable future made by and for a consumer's society. We need something strong to focus our will and our hope in humanity. I think that, for us, this common ground is ANIME. In those animations, we find comfort, strength, hope, and sometimes, as a warning, our own worst fears. Animation is also entertainment. It's a way to forget ourselves (and the problems of our modernity), to relax in another world.

It reminds me of the time I was playing AD&D in College. I was spending evenings and nights with friends, exploring dungeons, fighting orcs and dragons, destroying Evil to keep the balance of the world. In this struggle for our simulated life, we experienced lots of frustrations, conflicts between players, and human flaws. Nevertheless, it was FUN because it kept alive our spirit of childhood: with its deep curiosity, its capability for amazement and abstraction that make things different. I stopped playing AD&D when I lost this special feeling. It never happened with other games; only with a gripping book or movie. A few months ago, I was watching RECORD OF LODOSS WAR and I felt it again. Beside that LODOSS WAR is (obviously) inspired by the good old AD&D, it's pure Fantasy and that's why it fascinates our imagination: it depicts a very contrasted world, rich in beauties, that touch something deep in us, some lost memories. David Suzuki, in a recent newspaper article, explained the tragedy of our society by the fact that "We have lost the Sense of Wonder and awe once inspired by a feeling of kinship with the rest of the living world". We must cherish those little animated fantasies not only for the small pleasure they give but, maybe, also for the increased HUMAN awareness they bring. So, thanks to all of you for sharing this powerful interest with us.

* * *

Several of our products were LATE last year and I think that you deserve an explanation. PA #13 and 14 were late for numerous reasons: several staff members were unavailable most of the summer (Alain was rushing to finish his PhD and Michel was working for the army), we moved into a larger office (which took a couple of weeks to fit out). All staff attended Project A-Kon and AnimeCon (leaving nobody at home to work), we changed our printer, we had to deal with a UPS strike, a Canada Post strike and a customs strike! So, the already late issues took one month and half to be delivered. And, as if that wasn't enough, Alain, Jean, and Michel left the company in search of more stable careers (Alain got a teaching job, Michel returned to his previous work, and Jean started his own company doing game translations — we can't blame them: a real life begins with a real job particularly when you want to put food on the table! — but they will continue to collaborate with us once in a while). It took the whole Fall to get along with administrative tasks that I was not familiar with and to restructure the company around a new group of collaborators. Ianus and New Order Publications (MECHA-PRESS) are now putting their efforts together and the two companies have practically merged. Everything was reorganized in a more effective way before the cold winds of winter. With a new enthusiasm, we made a production blitz to catch up on our delays. We finished PA #15 (which had been sleeping in the computer for several months); it was followed by the ANIME SHOWER SPECIAL #2, MECHA-PRESS #2, the revised edition of MP #1, and now PA #16. So we are beginning 1992 with a new team and a new look; we hope that you will appreciate the changes!

Now, I am sure that lots of fans complained about our irregular releases. I don't want to complain myself but I hope most fans understand that our job is far from being fun. It is not easy and there are always some unexpected obstacles: find the information, have it translated from Japanese, find illustrations, deal with printers, work on tight schedules, respond to letters, fill orders, do shipping, etc., and over all this keep the quality of the product (design, interesting articles, language — remember, we are French-Canadians). But we wouldn't do it if we didn't believe in it. If not I wouldn't have dropped my PhD. It looks like a total dedication (no time to go out, no girlfriend, etc.) but those little sacrifices are worth the experience. We find a great satisfaction in this work, even if we are still unpaid and work late at night, often on weekends (but our official opening hours are still 10:00 to 20:00 E.S.T. — please avoid calling outside those hours). We are sorry for the delays but be sure that we are always doing our best. Be patient and don't forget that all this wouldn't be possible without your constant support.

Finally, I have something wonderful to announce: our 1992 schedule! This year, Ianus/New Order Publications will diversify their products in five different sectors: 1) the Anime magazines; 2) Science Fiction books (in French); 3) Comic books; 4) Gaming; and 5) Merchandising products. We want to bring more to fans of all countries. That's why we are also trying to develop an opening on the European market.

PROTOCULTURE ADDICTS is shedding its skin to offer an improved look: bigger size (8" 1/4 x 10" like ANIME V), and a totally new design (cover & inside). I think we'll keep this look for a couple of

years. You won't be disappointed: PA is now printed on white paper. As this kind of paper cost a lot and as the new format already doubled production cost we faced an inescapable economic choice: we raised the cover price to $3.50 ($3.95 Can) — but note that the SUBSCRIPTION fee stayed the SAME! We would have liked to use recycled paper; it would have been great to stop speechifying and try to really do something for the environment but we discovered that we couldn't afford that kind of paper this year... Another step in increasing the quality of PA will be to have a 4 or 8-page section printed in color on glossy paper like in most Japanese magazines. Maybe next year!

PA #17 (Mar-Apr) will feature "Project A-Ko", US Manga Corps, "Dragon Century", and a report on AnimeCon '91. #18 (May-Jun) will focus on Streamline Pictures products ("Zillion", "Lensman", "Robot Carnival"). The other issues will talk about "Silent Mobius", "Nadia", "Megazone 23", "Rojin-Z". We are planning other posters (probably to be included in PA). The ANIME SHOWER SPECIAL #3 will be released in July.

MECHA•PRESS, the Mecha/gaming magazine, also changed its look. As the limited-edition of the first issue (dedicated to GUNDAM MS) is almost sold out, it will be reprinted in a revised edition: new 9" 1/4 x 12" format, new color cover, and new articles (it will now have 36 pages). It also features an introduction to BATTLETECH and new ideas for MEKTON. Issue #2 (Mar/Apr) is dedicated to PATLABOR and introduces new games: TECHNO-POLICE 2100 AD and MECHA!™. MP #3 (GUNDAM 0080 and VOTOMS) was previously solicited for November but is resolicited for May to fit in our new schedule. The following issues will focus on GUNDAM F-91 & BUBBLEGUM CRISIS (#4: July/August), VOTOMS & BUBBLEGUM CRASH (#5: Sept/Oct), and FIVE STAR STORIES (#6: Nov/Dec). MECHA-PRESS is perfect for either the action anime fan, the wargamer, or the mecha modeler! It retails at $4.95 US ($5.50 Can). We are also planning a SPACESHIP special issue for September.

The GATES OF PANDRAGON comic has been cancelled because of low orders and issue #2 never hit the shelves. This time we strike back with a professional artist: Tim ELDRED, already well-known for LENSMAN, BROID, CHASER PLATOON, DEATHSHADOW RISING. **CYBERSUIT ARKADYNE**, written by Eldred and Jonathan JARRARD, is a six-issue monthly mini-series beginning in March. In Fall, we will publish another comic, a delirious space opera called STAR RIDERS, by two young wolves: Alex Racine (art) and Étienne Gagnon (story).

New Order Publications will start this year a line of gaming books. It will include some original games and some modules or sourcebooks for existing games. The first one will be NIGHT'S EDGE, a vampire optional sourcebook for Cyberpunk by Justin Schmid. This publication has been made possible by an exclusive licensing agreement with R. Talsorian Games and will probably be released for GenCon (August). We will also publish TECHNO-POLICE 2100 AD, a fast-paced law enforcement game à la APPLESEED by Alexandre Racine & Marc-Alexandre Vézina. We have a couple of other projects that will be announced before the end of the year. In early summer, we will release a gaming journal: the GAMERS' HERALD. This non-expensive, 16-page tabloid will talk about all kinds of role-playing games: modern, horror, fantasy, etc. Keep an eye out for the GAMERS' HERALD and MECHA-PRESS: all new gaming products will be announced there.

New Order will offer some other products. There will be T-shirts, of course, and... resin model kits. We will produce conversion kits for already existing models as well as entirely new mecha designs. You will be able to enjoy them either as collector's items, or use them with MEKTON, MECHA!™, or TECHNO-POLICE 2100 AD as miniatures. Again, look in MECHA-PRESS for more information.

As you can see, 1992 will be a very busy year for us. The new products like the gaming line and the resin models will receive particular emphasis, but the HIGHLIGHT of the products will definitively be CYBERSUIT ARKADYNE and MECHA-PRESS. Comics distribution being what it is, you better make sure your local retailer ordered them or ordering directly from us will be the only way to have them. Please, pass the word on your friends. It's like the "Hygrade sausages" principle: they are better because more people buy them, and more people buy them because they are better! Thanks for your support. Our magazines are made by you, for you!

This issue is mostly dedicated to RECORD OF LODOSS WAR. Besides our regular chronicles, you will find a new feature called VRILITWHAI SPEAKS!, an introduction to CYBERSUIT ARKADYNE, and the second part of the Ben Dunn's interview. Enjoy!

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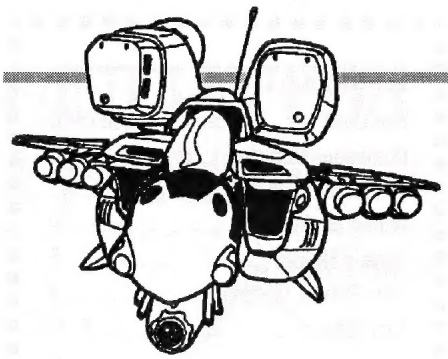

Dear PA,

Yes, I do miss *Robotech* a lot. I don't think I'll be a regular buyer anymore. I would like to applaud you for not using any violence in the *Anime Shower Special.*

Contrary to JC's arguments I believe the "Shower Scene" genre is the "girlie mentality" that Deborah Fredricks pointed out to us. I believe that such an illusion filled mentality does affect the view of women in our society. I do not object to making fun of the male ego. Issue number eight of the *Sentinels* comic book (page 22) had an excellent "girlie" scene. This was a little slice of the alternate reality that exists inside the male mind. That is definitely in keeping with the original spirit and humor of *Robotech.*

The "girlie mentality" is real though. It is true that in it women are "allow of identity". I would hope that you believe that no one is an object to be used by others (see Fredrick's letter). This is obviously not true, at least in the big picture. JC's editorials often treat one of *Robotech's* most important characters as symbolic of female "airhead" problems. The victims of the Polytechnic massacre were only used to make a point.

I would like to bring up the problem of racism. Part of the attraction in Anime in the west is the presence of "exotic" (Asian) women. This takes "girlieism" upon a notch. Foreign women, when seen as sex objects represents something special and different; a new toy. They no longer represent something outside one's own experience, someone to learn from and appreciate. More importantly, society is on the verge of associating Asian women with the "girlie mentality". You wouldn't want that to happen.

So far *Protoculture Addicts* has not been a part of these things. Let's not have it change now.

Sincerely,

David Yoshinari
Fountain Valley, CA

Your point on Asian women is unfortunately true. Lets be careful about that. Have a look at our Anime Shower #2 and you'll see that we are making efforts to avoid this so-called "girlie mentality".

Dear AD,

Regarding your request for thoughts on the *Robotech* inquiry:

"28-year-old perverts", huh. From Hollywood's present output, I'm half-tempted to crack that seems to be the kind of audience TV programmers were looking for anyway! But seriously folks... I freely concede the point your station managers and Robert Napton made (in an earlier article of the same issue). Disney is top dog right now in syndication, and deservedly so.

But as for the claim that "soft" is in, I can't believe that will be true in the long run. About a half century or so ago, kids read books about heroes like Tom Swift, Nancy Drew, "Dave Dashaway, Boy Aviator", and hundreds of other soulmates in juvenile book series. Radio sounded the exploits of Little Orphan Annie, The Lone Ranger, Tom Mix, Jack Armstrong and other like ilk. Captain Marvel and Superman dominated the comics stands; the comic pages were ruled by the likes of Tarzan, Buck Rogers, Flash Gordon, Phantom, Prince Valiant, and on and on. Kids lined up at their neighborhood movie houses Saturday afternoon to see the great Republic serials, Roy Rogers and Hopalong Cassidy.

Move back to when television came in 20-30 years ago. The stars of childhood were Sky King, Johny Quest, the Mighty Hercules, Space Ghost, Astro Boy, Eight Man, The Thunderbirds, and Supercar. Serials such as Magical Boomerang and The Hardy Boys provided daily menace on the Mickey Mouse Club. A different kind of Marvel and Superman ruled the comic stands. Even the past couple decades saw programs like the Filmation live/action *Shazam/Isis, He-Man/She-Ra, Voltron, Defender of the Universe, Dungeon and Dragons, Wildfire, Galaxy Rangers, G.I. Joe,* etc., etc. Can such a long-standing thirst by the kiddie world for adventure and action have permanently dried up overnight? I would not bet on it. Maybe gone deep underground for now, but I have a gut feeling that some future programmer will eventually hit a gusher by tapping into this artesian well at just the right moment.

I'm not slamming "soft" programming; it definitely has its place (matter of fact, I've always thought *My Little Pony* was a classic example of programming myopia in the opposite direction. The ponies obviously called for scripting of the "Wind in the Willows"/ Winnie the Pooh/ Raggedy Ann and Andy variety, not the "Darth Vader" villain they were stuck with in their first TV special). But continuing to do it to death in the next few years? That could well end up working in favor of program like *Robotech* by making audiences eager for a change-of-pace. The last time Disney was seemingly going to wipe all animation rivals off the map, the eventual big winners in the animation of that era were Popeye, Bugs Bunny, Woody Woodpecker, Mighty Mouse, Tom and Jerry — i.e., characters most successful establishing themselves most different from Disney. Matter of fact, the really big winners in the 3-5 p.m. syndication slot this past decade (*He-Man*, TMNT, *Ducktales* and *Tiny Toons*) were all very different from anything then on the air at that time.

That being said, I am forced to agree with the notion that *Robotech* should have been aimed at young adults.

The main appeal of *Star Trek* initially was toward adolescents and collegians, and its best network ratings and eventual hit status in syndication was achieved in the early evening slot, whereas moving to 10 p.m. led to cancellation. If my memory serves me right, *Robotech* was a megahit in LA in an early evening time slot. It would seem a reasonable assumption that not too many high school or college students would be watching during the 7-9 a.m. and 3-5 p.m. time slots that the show was mainly shoved into across the country.

However, I am convinced that there is one maneuver that would make *Robotech* and other similar sci-fi epics immediately welcome in prime time — just do a *Star Trek* animated series. I guarantee it would be a surefire hit for any network that put it on in prime time. (Someone also recently had the most interesting suggestion that independent stations throw the great cartoon blockbusters of late afternoon against today's weak prime-time programming by network. If nothing else, it would at least ease some of the "Disney" and "Tiny Toons" glut everyone gripes about).

I think the saddest comments were "robots are not the way to go". I don't think I have to explain to this audience that the people were the essence of *Robotech*, and that to lump the show with *Transformers* or *GoBots*, or even *Voltrons, Tranzor Z* or the *Mighty Orbots*, would be quite unfair. But if Japanimation has become synonymous with "robots" in the mind of the average American station manager, that would be the greater tragedy. Sometimes, I wonder if even comics fans and even (*gasp!*) American anime fans might not become a bit too narrow in their taste for Japanimation, concentrating solely on the aspects of sci-fi, war, super-hero, mutant, apocalyptic, horror, and "punk". Certainly the Japanese have turned out much excellent material of this type, but all that I've seen and heard of their animation would seem to indicate that it covers a much broader range of genres. You want "soft", Mr. Station Manager? Japanimation includes credible adaptations of stars of children literature ("The Little Prince", "Alice in Wonderland", "Anne of Green Gables", "Sherlock Holmes" and the "Wizard of Oz", just to name a few). I think *The Three Musketeers* or *Cat's eye* would attract an audience interested in swashbuckling derring-do and good humor. One major Japanese prime-time yuppy comedy hit was compared by mainstream American media to the *Simpsons* and the *Wonder Years*. There is farce, historic dramas, sports, soap opera, funny animals, fairy tails... I imagine the list could go on. (Somehow, I'm not surprised to hear one station report that *Robotech* got much more Canadian interest. Since I've seen Canadian network air *Candy, Astroboy, Cat's eye, The Little Prince, Alice in Wonderland, Anne of Green Gables* and *Sherlock Holmes* in recent years, it seems our northern neighbor is far more appreciative of the quality of Japanimation and its commercial potential than this country). One thought: if no one in Japan has a *Mai* anime series ready to crack the U.S. market in the wake of the upcoming movie, that would blow one golden opportunity (it will be interesting to see if Saban does better with the *The Little Mermaid* than it did with *Macron One* or *Dragon Warrior*).

As for the charge that *Robotech* was "not a high quality cartoon", "dumb", "not fluid enough", I am rather stuck for a response. My impression is that the station managers are mainly complaining that *Robotech* used limited animation. Maybe Disney animation is more full. However, I fully agree with a comment by Friz Freleng that a general audience doesn't really recognize fuller animation, that additional time and money may give you more talented artists and more "acting" by the animated characters, but if your concept is all wrong in the first place, beautiful animating is not going to matter at all. (Disney itself

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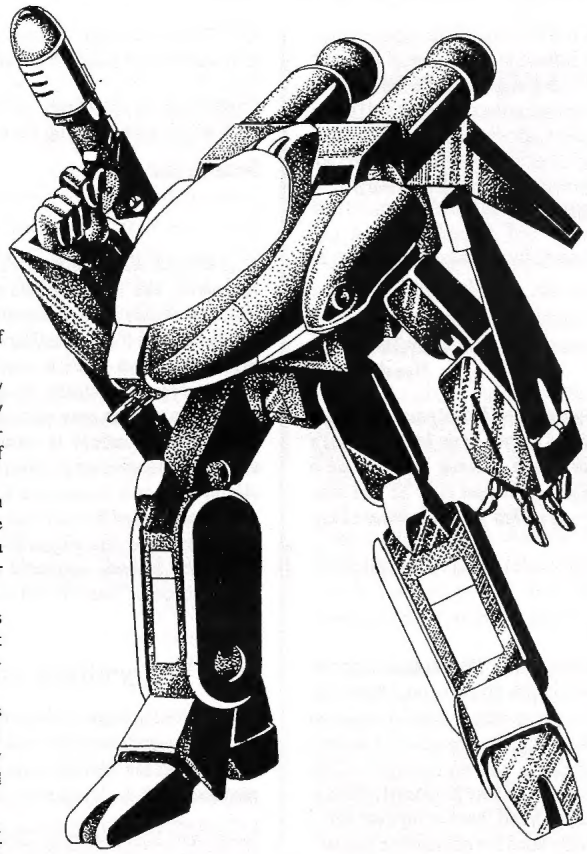
ROBOTECH™: Southern Cross on videocassette



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For the first time ever, **Palladium Books®** will release the 24 episodes of **ROBOTECH™: Southern Cross** starting **October 1991!**

That's right, this fall the **Southern Cross** portion of the **Robotech** trilogy will become available on videocassette. Just like the **ROBOTECH™: New Generation series**, each videocassette will contain **three (3)** complete, unedited, episodes. Each box will contain new artwork and each tape will be of the identical, high quality as the **New Generation** videocassettes.

Southern Cross takes place 20 years after **Macross**. The REF has left Earth defenses in the hands of the *Armies of the Southern Cross*. A military force that has had little combat experience, but is smart, energetic and possesses a variety of new mecha. Earth is in seemingly capable hands. Then disaster strikes.

The Robotech Masters invade Earth! The Armies of the Southern Cross rise to valiantly meet the challenge of this new alien attacker, but are not prepared for the superior firepower and advanced robotechnology at the fingertips of the maleficent Robotech Masters.

The most notable characters include **Dana Sterling** (Max & Miriya Sterling's daughter), **Bowie Grant** (the younger brother of Claudia Grant of SDF-1 fame), the cyber-punk **Louie Nichols**, the tough **Nova Satori**, the fatherly **General Rolf Emerson**, the bellicose **Supreme Commander Leonard**, and the enigmatic **Zor Prime** (a clone of the original Zor!).

Mecha includes the **Veritech Hover Tank, Veritech Copter, Veritech Logan,** as well as other war vehicles, jets, spaceships and battloids! Lots of great fight sequences in space and on the ground! **The Robotech Masters' troops** include the cold and evil Masters, themselves, the strange mistress of the Cosmic Harp and a legion of new mecha called **Bioroids.** Plus the **Robotech Masters' giant Mothership, Robotech Assault Carrier, Bioroid Hover Sled,** and **Bioroid Terminator!**

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ROBOTECH™: Southern Cross Videocassette Schedule of release

Volume One: Contains episodes **37: Dana's Story, 38: False Start,** and **39: Southern Cross.** Our story opens with the graduation of several new cadets in the Army of the Southern Cross, including Dana Sterling and Bowie Grant. Dana reminisces about how her parents first met and the Macross saga is loosely recapped. But story telling is interrupted by the invasion of the Robotech Masters and ensuing battle with the new alien attackers. Hover tanks and bioroids in action! **Available late October 1991!!**

Volume Two: Contains episodes **40: Volunteers, 41: Half Moon,** and **42: Danger Zone.** More combat and adventure in space and on Earth as the ensuing war begins to heat up. The Masters want something but nobody can figure out what it is. The mystery continues, but spirits are high, the Southern Cross appears to be on a roll. **Available December 1st, 1991.**

Volume Three: Contains episodes **43: Prelude to Battle, 44: The Trap, 45: Metal Fire.** Dana leads her squad into the alien mothership where they experience a number of strange things, encounter Musica, mistress of the Cosmic Harp, and barely escape a trap. civilians are taken hostage and turned into the zombie-like pilots of bioroids. Zor is captured and the mystery and madness thickens. **Available Mid-January, 1992.**

Volume Four: Episodes **46: Star Dust, 47: Outsiders, 48: Deja vu.** Dana continues to exhibit a bit of empathy and psychic hunches and can not shake certain feelings about the captive bioroid pilot (Zor). **Available late February, 1992.**

Volume Five: Presents episodes **49: A New Recruit. 50: Triumvirate, 51: Clone Chamber.** It is decided to induct Zor into the Army of the Southern Cross. A full scale assault is launched against the Masters. Zor, Dana and Bowie get closer to the secret of the Robotech Masters and protoculture. Plus epic space battles! **Available late March, 1992.**

Volume Six: Contains episodes **52: Love Song, 53: The Hunters, 54: Mind Game.** Louie Nichols creates the Pupil Pistol, Dana is involved in more intrigue, while the savage space battle continues, with exciting fight sequences involving the Veritech Copter. **Available late April, 1992.**

Volume Seven: Presents episodes **55: Dana in Wonderland, 56: Crisis Point, and 57: Day Dreamer.** The continues to escalate, with terrible consequences. Zor seems to be going mad, Dana is becoming more rebellious, Bowie finds love and the mystery continues. **Available late May, 1992.**

Volume Eight: The Conclusion of the Southern Cross series! This is it, the final showdown with the Robotech Masters, the decimation of Earth, death and sacrifice, hard decisions and a terrible glimpse of the thing to come. Includes episodes **58: Final Nightmare, 59; The Invid Connection, and 60: Catastrophe.** Available June or July 1992!

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provides prime evidence of this through the recent promotion of the *Rocky and Bullwinkle* series, one of the most primitively animated — but most brilliantly scripted — shows in history). I'm not saying the story values of Disney Afternoon is poor, or even mediocre. But I do feel the story values of *Robotech* and other top-notch Japanimation are broader and superior in many respects. It just needs to be shown to the right audience.

Maybe Books Nippan could try canvassing managers of PBS stations?

Yours truly,

Gary Thompson
Dearborn, MI

Thanks for your lenghty input. What you said about the narrowing taste of anime fans is true. That's why we'll try in the future to have features on a large diversity of animation (not only SF but also romantic or sport — we plan also a review of old robot shows).

Dear Friends,

I have been a faithful reader of *Protoculture Addicts*, whenever I can get my hands on an issue. I have just returned from a 90-day tour of duty in Saudi Arabia. I'm in the United States Air Force. I found issue #13 waiting for me (ordered it from Books Nippan). I started reading it straight away, and ran across your proposal to change the name of our fanzine. Well, here is my two cents worth of comment, I only hope I'm not too late (haven't seen the recent issue).

If you feel it appropriate to change the name, then do so. I have only one request, that the name reflect the parent that gave birth to it in the first place. Yes, I'm speaking of *Robotech*. It's very important that we don't forget our roots, so to speak.

As for myself, and others that I've meet, it was *Robotech* that opened the marvelous door to Japanese animation. As far back as I can remember, I have always enjoyed animation, but the American type always lacked substance. I had no way of knowing that the Japanese had surpassed the U.S., until that wonderful afternoon in 1985 when I saw *Robotech*. It was *Robotech* that gave me the knowledge of something that equaled Disney. From *Robotech* came information upon other shows of Japanese origin, of which I looked into. One thing followed another, and there I am today, a firm believer in animation with serious adult storylines. If it weren't for the work, dedication and foresight of CARL MACEK and Harmony Gold, I would not have the source of enjoyment in animation that I have today.

I believe we owe a great deal to Carl Macek & Harmony Gold, and should honor them by maintaining a name that reminds people of *Robotech*. Our fanzine is the offspring of *Robotech*. I like the name we have now, but one should never reject change, when it's time to do so. But change does not mean to eliminate the memory of the past.

To make a switch to general comments, I love the new format you incorporated into the fanzine. The Anime Gossips column was great. I would like to see an interview or article upon how one could get started in the animation business, and what skills/talents are required for it. I'm not good with freehand drawing, but my strength is in drafting (if it's used in the animating process).

Do you have any plans to reprint the back issues that have gone out of stock? Keep up the excellent work!!

Sincerely yours,

Micheal R. Goebel
McGuire AFB, NJ

Carl Macek was overly criticized for his work on Robotech. We owe him this marvelous show that made us discover Japanimation. He had done what he could with the means Harmony Gold gave him. I would not be so quick to praise the (greedy) motivation of Harmony Gold, though. Carl is still trying his best to give us new animation in English. About the "how-to" article in anime field, I don't have much information on that but I'll see what I can do. About the back issues, it's difficult to do reprints because most of the sold out issues are mainly our Robotech ones (the old stuff) and we don't have the Robotech license anymore. Nevertheless, we'll probably do a "best of" PA one day.

Dear Protoculture Addicts,

Hello, I'm a Japanese student and studying in Germany. I'm also a manga fan and "reading" animation fan. That means I don't see TV or Video much but I like to read anime magazine such as *Animage* or *Out*.

Away from Japan by about 100,000 km, you could imagine how I miss my manga collection or how eager I am to read Japanese, especially new information about Japanese anime and manga.

There are a few (still much more than I expected) anime and manga fans here in Germany. Because of my hunger, I borrowed as much manga and anime magazines they had, not only original in Japanese, but also in English like *Animag #7* and *Protoculture Addicts* #8 and 12.

To my surprise, I found it very interesting to read them. First, I was amazed by the power of oversea anime and manga fans. Despite the language barrier, they manage to see and love Japanese animation. And you accept also the different Japanese anime or manga styles, big eyes, too long legs or such. In this point, your are more transcultural than I because I grew up in Japanese manga and I am so used to their style that I have still some problems to enjoy western comics, I must say.

I was happy to find a comment in *Protoculture Addicts* #8, which says, "Nausicaä had a sorry fate on video because of a drastic edition of the film to a 90-minute format. A shame!" Recently, I had a chance to see Nausicaä in the German version, which I heard to be a double translation from the English version. Since Nausicaä is my favorite and I know the story pretty well, I was very shocked to see this version. Sorry to tell about such an old topic. You must all know about it well. But it was such an impression for me. Of course, I had already heard that American producers change all of animations, but it's quite different to see it with my own eyes. Not only the names are changed — I could understand when difficult (for non-Japanese) Japanese names are americanized, but since names in Nausicaä are all rather western, the changes are quite meaningless — but also the story was changed, made worse, if I may say it. Many beautiful and important scenes were cut, and the syncronisation was intentionally changed in words. The function of the wood —cleans of the earth — was neglected, and the prophecy of the "blue clad one" was most part not used. These two factors are, however, which made Nausicaä such a deep meaning story. I can't understand why the American producers wanted to erase them. Maybe they thought that the movie was too difficult for children. But then, it's a serious insult for them. It was not only adult fans who made Nausicaä a great hit in Japan. Anyway, it was nice to read that American fans feel in the similar way. And I'm also glad to find out that this heroine is still known as Nausicaä and not as "Princess Sandra".

There is also a very good translation of Nausicaä comics by Viz. I was so angry to see the video version because I had read the translation and knew that a translation could be done so well. I enjoyed reading it very much. It's a good trend that many of Japanese manga have been faithfully translated and some videos are now sold with subtitles. I hope it will go further.

One other thing I liked to read in the *Protoculture Addicts* and *Animag* was the animation story introductions. In Japanese animation magazines, there are lot of pretty cell pictures but stories are just hinted a little or, when introduced, only until the climax. We are supposed to see it afterwards. But in American magazines, stories must be told fully, of course, fans need them when they see original tapes. As a "reading" animation fan, it was a great satisfaction to read complete stories, although I sometimes have questions about the ways names are written in alphabet. I enjoyed *Ranma 1/2* episodes in *Protoculture Addicts* #12 so much! I've never knew how the story began and went on. You made a good job to print the episodes compact but complete.

I thank you for your efforts and wish you a good fortune! I would be glad to read your further editions, too.

Sincerely,

Tsuriga Yukie
Berlin, Germany

I am honored that a Japanese fan could find interest in our magazine. I always thought "what is the use to read English magazine when you can read Newtype or Anime V?" You made us even more proud of our work. It is sad that many animations had been butchered in their translation but now most companies put great attention to stay faithful to the original version.

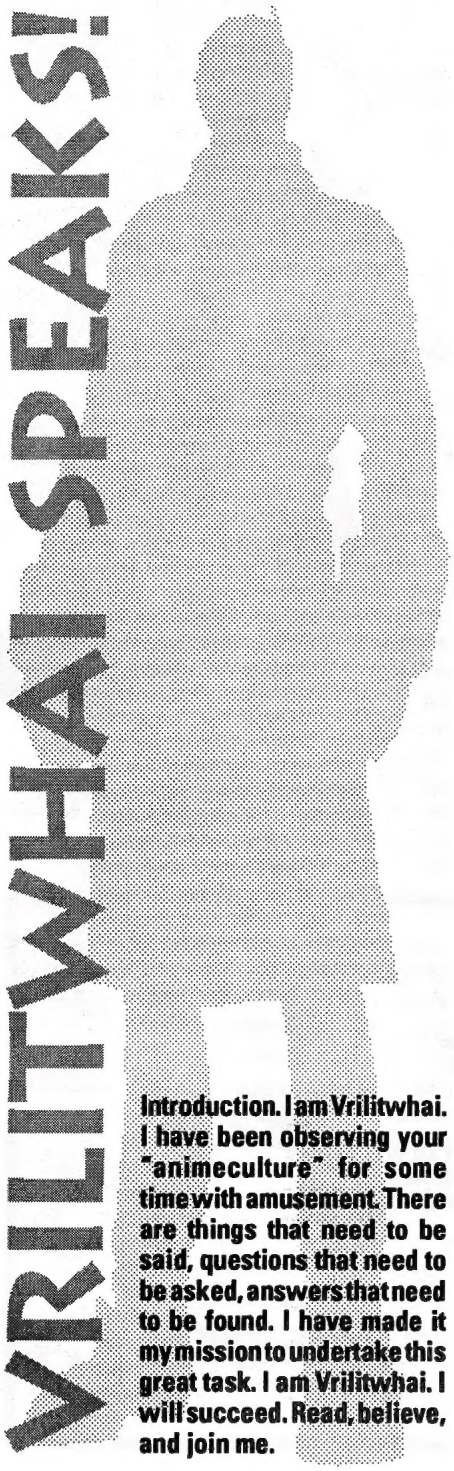
The Japanese animation seems to be well established in Germany. I know that there is also a German version of AKIRA. I would be pleased if you or one of your friends could write us a report on the situation of the Japanese animation in Germany. We have already someone in Spain putting together that kind of review and I expect one of our French fan to do the same.

Thank you very much for your comments,

Claude J. Pelletier

FIRST STAGE

VRILITWHAI SPEAKS!



Introduction. I am Vrilitwhai. I have been observing your "animeculture" for some time with amusement. There are things that need to be said, questions that need to be asked, answers that need to be found. I have made it my mission to undertake this great task. I am Vrilitwhai. I will succeed. Read, believe, and join me.

The OVA: Boon or Bane?

You Earthpeople have such a quaint way with words. OVA (sometimes OAV) stands for Original Animation Video. (To stay on Vrilitwhai's good side, **do not** pronounce this as if it were an unfertilized egg.) As the name implies, this is a video that exists solely as a retail item. Not shown on TV, not shown in a movie theater. This concept came about in 1983 with that all time fan-favorite series, *Dallos*. Yes, contrary to popular thought, *Megazone 23* was not the first! It can be said, however, that the "boom" of the OVA did not occur until 1985, with the release of such high profile titles as *Megazone 23*, *Area 88* and *Votoms: The Last Red Shoulder*.

These three titles are a good example of the main types of OVA's. The Series Spinoff (*Votoms*), The Limited Series (*Area 88*), and the One Shot Special (*Megazone 23*). (Yes, Vrilitwhai knows that *Megazone 23* has spawned two sequels, but at the time it was intended to stand on its own. Besides, on critical grounds, Vrilitwhai feels there is only one true *Megazone 23*.)

Series Continuation allows a production company to wrap up loose ends (for series like *Layzner* and *Vifam*), fill in the gaps in storylines (*Votoms*), or even retell a story in a new way (*Galient*, *Dunbine*). They are safe, easy money. The fans already know the characters, and most development costs have been absorbed by the original production. Think of these as "mainstream" comic books that have occasional rebirth.

Limited Series are projects that could have been a regular TV series in an earlier time. Most, Vrilitwhai feels, would not have cut it, because of weak storytelling and incomplete concept development. Others are so derivative in their development that you may as well go back and watch the proginator over again. There are many examples of this type, such as *The Guyver*, *BubbleGum Crisis/Crash*, *Aim for the Top! Gunbuster*, *Iczer 1*, and on and on. There are some OVA Series that Vrilithwhai approves of, such as *Patlabor*, *Mellorink*, *Legend of the Galactic Hero* and *Locke the Superman: Lord Leon*.

One Shots are the stand-alone OVA's, such as *Appleseed*, *Black Magic M-66*, *Riding Bean*, *Cosmo Police Justy*, and *Prefectural Earth Defense Force*. While there may be some hope on the producer's side of these becoming an ongoing series, OVA's such as these are produced to stand by themselves. One Shots seem to be a dying breed, and Vrilitwhai mourns their apparent passing. The One Shot format often showcases OVA's at their best. No big budget movie pressures, no TV series deadline problems, a story can be as long as it needs to be — 15 minutes, 36 minutes, whatever. But instead, producers have fallen on safe formats. Continuing serials, half-hour episodes. Opening credits, midpoint "eyecatch" and end theme titles.

Hear now, Vrilitwhai's angry voice!

It is these also-ran, not-quite-TV-series OVA's that are partially to blame for the death of quality anime on TV in Japan now! There are other reasons, to be sure. Inflation, lack of sponsors, production houses closing down, etc. But this is irrelevant! The Video producers and the Production companies have discovered that there is easy money in OVA production. No commitments with Networks, no problems with Standards and Practices, no Ratings worries, just money, money, money!

And worst of all, the North American Anime fans have bought into it! Vrilitwhai is amazed at what is embraced as quality animation! *Iczer 1* ! a fluff piece that started out as a "Cream Lemon" project. *Gall Force: Earth Stories*! a pale imitation of the "Terminator" future. *Aim for the Top!* A lovingly done parody of giant robot, girls sports and space opera, treated as if it was the most innovative, serious anime ever! How did this come to be?!?

Vrilitwhai feels that it all boils down to one factor: availability. In the old days, a fan had a tough time collecting his (or her) favorite anime programs. A trading partner had to be found. Tapes exchanged. Penpals obtained. Then there were the problems of missed episodes, poor quality copies, and finally, trying to decipher the complex extended subplots! Luckily, Vrilitwhai understands all your languages and does not have the last problem.

Enter the OVA. A product readily available for the ordering on videotape (and later Laser Disc), first generation quality and perfect. Easy to collect, generally not a brain stretcher of a plot, very pretty and shiny, like a piece of cheap plastic jewelry. And Fans flocked about (as did the Anime Mercs [evil video pirates], but that's another tale) like magpies looking for a pretty thing for the nest. Look, you lemmings, to your trading lists! Is it full of such inconsequential nonsense as *Nora*, *Fandora*, the entire *Iczer* saga, *Megazone 23* part III, *Baoh*? Is your only exposure to the *Gundam* saga the final movie and inferior OVA series? Is *Yamato* just a word, empty of emotion?

I, Vrilitwhai, challenge you to expand beyond the confines of your present limitations. Save your money on OVA's and buy one of the many Laser Disc boxed collections of TV series now available. Let Vrilitwhai show you how this can be both emotionally and fiscally satisfying.

For this example Vrilitwhai will assume a price of one cent=one yen. With some Laser Disc suppliers this is possible.

BubbleGum Crash Vol. 1 — "Illegal Army"/ 45 min./ 94.00=$62 per 1/2 hour.

Cat's Eye Perfect Collection (the 1st 36 eps)/ 1080 min/ 540.00= $15 per 1/2 hour.

Quite a saving, eh? And you still get Pretty Girls in tight outfits running around with action and adventure, with no waiting several months for the next chapter to come out!

Big Flash!!

While Vrilitwhai knows that this will be old news when it sees print, Vrilitwhai feels that he must comment on this now, while the feelings are still fresh. Through various spies and intellience-gathering apparati, Vrilitwhai has learned of the new OVA series called *Macross II* (for now). Though Vrilitwhai is pleased by the return of his fellow Zentraedi, as it will seem like old home week and all, Vrilitwhai can't help but be concerned about what ELSE will happen. In case this is fresh news when published, Vrilitwhai has a short briefing prepared:

The story is unknown at this writing, but it takes place quite some time after the *Macross* TV series. It is a 6-episode OVA from Bandai Visual Media (Emotion), produced by Big West and Macross Planning Group for a 1992 release. There is some group called the Marduke Army (of Zentraedi heritage) that seems to be antagonist to the main cast. A Zentraedi female by the name of Eshiutaru (who looks suspiciously like Eve from *Megazone 23*) figures prominetly in all report. Good for her.

Vrilitwhai is glad to see the official continuation of *Macross*. The problem lies in the frenzy that will doubtless be created by its release. The greatest probable effect will be the ever-hopful Robotechies deluding themselves into thinking this will be the Japanese version of *Robotech II: the Sentinels*, and that Harmony Gold will launch right in with the translation (or Carl Macek and Streamline will get the rights and "Robotech" it up). Sorry, Terrans. This will not happen. Bandai has too much invested in the project to let it go cheaply enough for Streamline to get it, and Harmony Gold has no interest in 6 new episodes of a dead series.

Another effect will be how the *Macross II* OVA will be THE thing to collect in the coming year, **regardless of how good (or bad) it is!** There will be mindless taping of this thing going on all across the nation. Bragging points will be how close to the Japanese release did you get it, how good is your copy and who subtitles it first. Vrilitwhai is saddened by all that will transpire. Any quality, any sense of magic and wonder this series may have will be overwhelmed by the fannish-one-upmanship that is inevitable.

Vrilitwhai will offer an apology to Anime Fandom if the first episode of this OVA series remains unsubtitled one year after its release date. This is valid only for amateur productions. If someone actually purchases the rights for professional subtitling, more power to them (NftP: in fact, US Renditions are already working on a dubbed version!). Vrilitwhai feels that he will not have to make this apology. Will Vrilitwhai be proven wrong? Can Anime Fandom restrain itself? Vrilitwhai awaits the answer.

Next issue Vrilitwhai will return. Prepare yourself.

• • •

Note from the publisher: The above article was found one morning on our fax machine. Same thing for the letter we published in last issue. No heading that could indicate an origin. The author, calling himself Vrilitwhai, claims to be of Zentraedi blood. Possible, but hard to believe since Zentraedi have not entered our system yet. Strangely, HIS name sounds familiar. HE is communicating only via electronic means. Maybe HE is linked to our network via a cyberdeck, on a ship far from Earth, in orbit at a Lagrange point, probably the one behind the moon (anyway, who's there to check: Liberty station will probably never be made and Mir is for sale!). HE got interested in Japanese animation (that he calls "anime-culture") by watching our TV (a young Chinese singer called Minmei probably won HIS heart), or logging on some BBS. HE contacted us because we are the last source of protoculture. That's all I know. HIS opinions are rude but, somehow, I find them truthful. A kind of truth that no one dares to speak. We need that to stay alert, clear-minded. A voice of truth, of freedom. I respect HIS anonymity and I have decided to give HIM a chance: HE will have HIS own regular chronicle.

CJP

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VOLUME FIVE

ANIME GOSSIP

Edited by Michael Birchfield
Reported by Micheal Birchfield, Kevin Kinne, Paul Rigsby, Chris Bell, and Steve Bierce.

In a recent interview for Protoculture Addicts, *Outlanders* star Geobaldi was questioned wether his love scenes with furry friend Bathia were faked or not. "Of course not! Everyone knows that Bathia just can't resist a big ole' teddy bear like myself," he said, laughing heartily while downing a fifth JACK DANIELS in one gulp. "When you got as much as I have, no normal woman can lie there and fake it!," he added. When asked to explain further, Geobaldi just winked. (KK)

Youthful star Iczer-Three has snared her first endorsement as she has reached agreement with PLAYTEX to have her name on a new line of training bras. (MB)

Sadly, not all the news from the set of *Adventure! Iczer-Three* have been happy. As reported last issue, Iczer-One was unhappy that economic reasons had forced her to resume her acting career, but at least she took solace in the fact that rival Iczer-Two was not present this time. However, when she heard that Iczer-Two was re-signed by A.I.C. to appear in the last two acts, she reportedly threw a fit and was last seen headed in the direction of the nearest bar! (MB)

Nagisa Kano relative Nagisa Kasumi also had complaints about her role in the *Iczer-Three* film as she lamented the drawbacks of being an anime heroine. "It's not all glamour and excitement, you know — the contacts for my big, overly expressive eyes weight six pounds each and they had to be custom ground from spare Hubble telescope lenses. On the other hand, they're easy to find if they fall out!" (PR)

Rock singer Priss has been signed by TIMEX watches to appear in their commercials. "If I can take a licking and keep on ticking, then I need a watch that can do the same!," Priss says. (MB)

While on this subject, a snag has recently developped in the plan to have PRISS AND THE REPLICANTS appear on stage with NELVANA rock stars Angel and Omar. Rumor has it that Priss objects to sharing the spotlight with any rats, even evolved ones. (KK)

SDF-1 Captain Henry Gloval is peeved at the producers of his new show, "The Secret of Blue Water." Complains Mr. Gloval: "I don't have enough speaking parts and besides, the costume department is so cheap they make me wear my old RDF uniform!" (PR)

A commotion was reported at this year's FLORIDA STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL when former Lum (of *Urusei Yatsura* fame) love interest Rei overdid it as usual. Damage has been assessed at $500,000 dollars. (SB)

Famed martial artist Kenshiro — master of the "Northstar Death Fist" — will do special endorsement for METAMUCIL laxatives, but only on the condition that it works. It has been said that he has not had a bowel movement in almost twenty years! (CB)

Orange Road star Ayukawa Madoka has agreed to display her skills as a saxophonist on a special edition of "MTV Unplugged." (CB)

Another member of the *Orange Road* cast was also in the news recently as it has been reported that she was admitted to a nearby hospital for hyperactivity. While the hopital refused to confirm this, eyewitnesses claim it was Madoka's friendly rival Hikaru Hiyama. (KK)

Crewmember April of the privateer starship SOL BIANCA has denied rumors that she is really rock star Madonna. (KK)

And speaking of look-alikes, it has recently been learned that *Rhea Gall Force* star Score got her start at A.I.C. as a stunt double for Priss. "I'm really quite lucky to be alive," Score says of her old job. (MB)

In related news, Score became violent when she was asked if she got her nickname because she was "easy". A lawsuit by this reporter will be pending. (MB)

Infamous *Akira* star Tetsuo Shima is reportedly signing a contract with TYLENOL pain relievers. "When I get one of my migrains, I need relief fast," he says, "and Extra-Strength TYLENOL brings me faster relief than either brand B or C!" (PR)

On a similar note, Mr. Shima has also agreed to performing a batch of public service announcements on Japanese television in which he will be spearheading the government's anti-drug campaign. The reported slogan: "Just say no — or else!" Coupled with his T.V. demonstrations depicting the effects of drugs on the brain in which he levitates an egg into a hot wock and then fries it, it is believed to be the solution to Japan's drug problem. Shima adds "When I was hooked, I just felt like I was falling apart and when it finally wore off, I felt like a degenerated organism — a real slug." (PR)

Kazianna Hesh has founded a new cosmetic company that addresses the needs of Zentreadi women — especially full-sized (un-micronized) ones. (SB)

At a recent exhibition game in Meg-Tokyo, Cincinnati Bengals' star quarterback "Boomer" Esiason was suddenly attacked by four armored maidens. However, the leader of the KNIGHT SABERS — Sylia Stingrey — later apologized for the mistake, but added that Mr. Esiason was at fault for the incident, saying he had "some nerve" for using that nickname. The shaken athlete disputed that, however, by pointing out that one of the KNIGHT SABERS was apparently a "Replicant." (MB/KK)

THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY

Has anyone noticed that in the A.I.C. promotional shots, Priss seems to be so paranoid that she is holding a knife and/or a gun whenever she is getting out of her hardsuit? (MB)

While still on the subject of *Bubble Gum Crisis*, it also seems that Leon McNichol has given up on Priss and instead is giving Nene Romanova more attention. (MB)

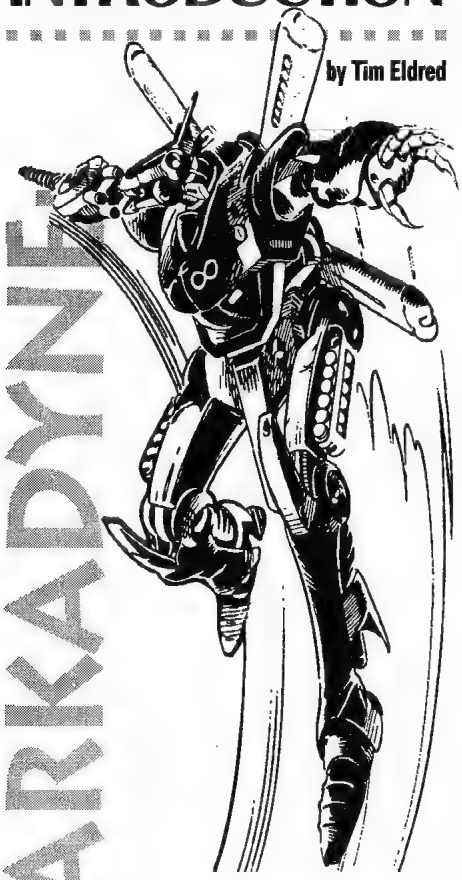
* * *

I recall here that the "Gossip" contributors are responsible for their views which are not necessarily those of Ianus Publications.

Micheal Birchfield has told me to invite all readers to contribute to the "Anime Gossip" if they want. Just send your punny contribution to "Anime Gossip", 2360 de LaSalle Ave., #211, Montreal, Qc., Canada, H1V 2L1.

CJP

AN INTRODUCTION



by Tim Eldred

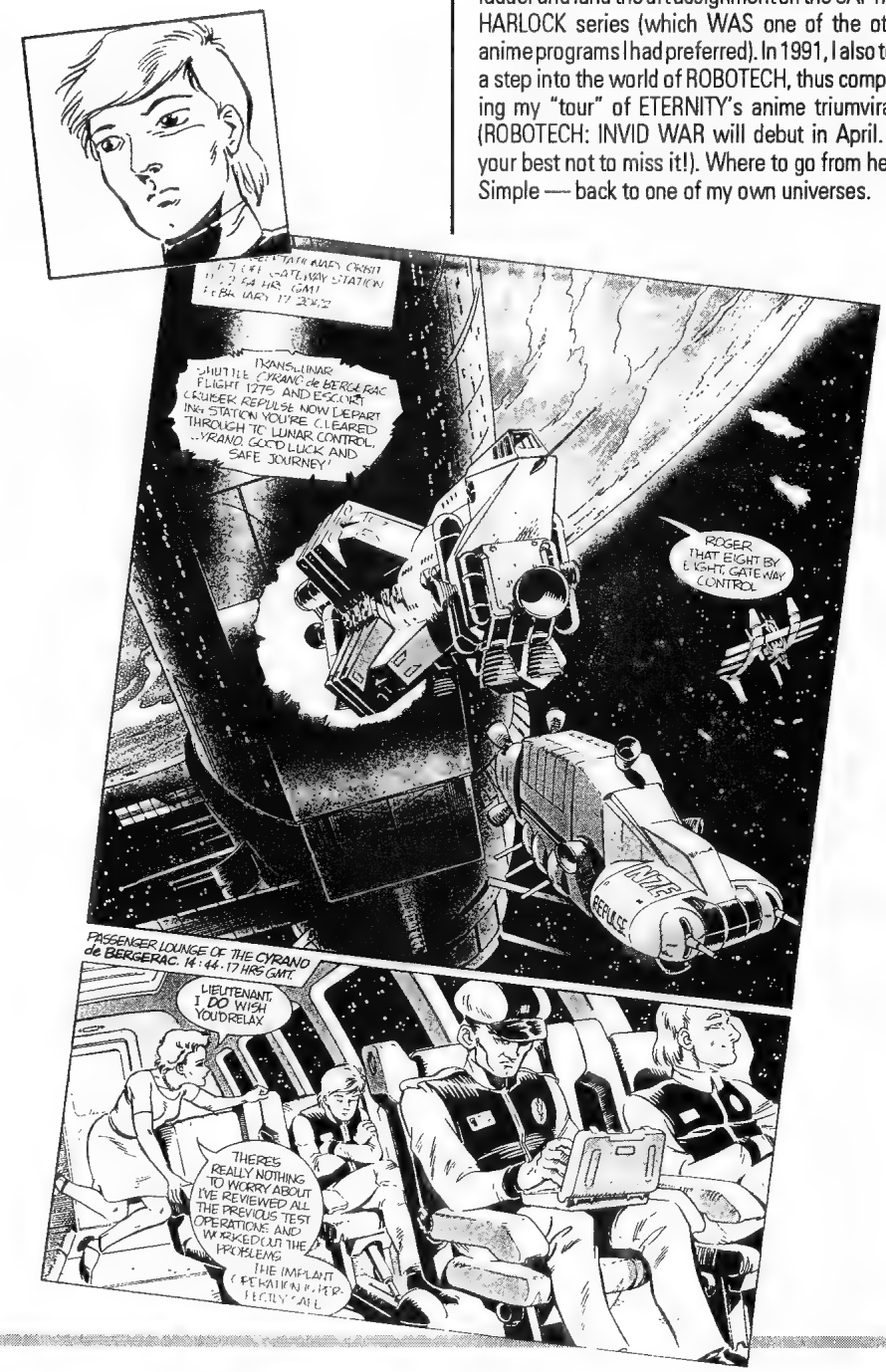
By the year 2052, mankind's expansion into space has encompassed the moon and Mars, and brought humans to the vast resources of the asteroid belt. There, civilian mining vessels have come under attack by a mysterious enemy that attacks and disappears without a trace. WSCA (World Space Cooperative Administration) has initiated the CYBERSUIT PROJECT, a countermeasure that was supposed to be top secret... until, when in its delicate first stage, its crew was attacked by the belt raiders in Earth orbit and saved by another, fully-operational Cybersuit!

GLENN TABACK is the first pilot chosen to operate ARKADYNE; a process that links him directly to the machine via cybernetic implant. Using an experimental system called the GRAVITIC DRIVE, he will be able to outfly and outfight anything imaginable... except himself.

In March 1992, a new publication will join the IANUS lineup. In the wake of PROTOCULTURE ADDICTS, MECHA PRESS, and the GATES OF PANDRAGON comes a comic series long in the making: CYBERSUIT ARKADYNE. It is a drama with classic science-fiction underpinnings that will have special appeal for anime fans in general and mecha fans in particular. I can say this because I fit into this category. Also because I created it.

Having been an anime fan since 1984, and an amateur comics artist even longer, I gradually began to combine the two interests. This culminated in my break into the professional comic market in 1989 when ETERNITY comics asked me to give them art samples for a new book they were about to release: LENSMAN. Although there were plenty of other anime programs I would rather have had the honor of adapting into an American comic, LENSMAN presented me with an ideal door-opener. Within a month of first meeting the editors at ETERNITY, I was assigned the pencilling duties on the series, and this gave way to my second project, BROID.

Since then, it has been my pleasure to move up the ladder and land the art assignment on the CAPTAIN HARLOCK series (which WAS one of the other anime programs I had preferred). In 1991, I also took a step into the world of ROBOTECH, thus completing my "tour" of ETERNITY's anime triumvirate. (ROBOTECH: INVID WAR will debut in April. Do your best not to miss it!). Where to go from here? Simple — back to one of my own universes.


TRANS-LUNAR SHUTTLE CYRANO de BERGERAC FLIGHT 1275 AND ESCORT CRUISER REPULSE NOW DEPART GATEWAY STATION YOU'RE CLEARED THROUGH TO LUNAR CONTROL. CYRANO, GOOD LUCK AND SAFE JOURNEY.
ROGER. THAT EIGHT BY EIGHT, GATEWAY CONTROL
REPULSE
PASSENGER LOUNGE OF THE CYRANO de BERGERAC. 14:44:17 HRS GMT.
LIEUTENANT, I DO WISH YOU'D RELAX.
THERE'S REALLY NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT. I'VE REVIEWED ALL THE PREVIOUS TEST OPERATIONS AND WORKED OUT THE PROBLEMS.
THE IMPLANT OPERATION WAS PERFECTLY SAFE.

CYBERSUIT ARKADYNE

Unknown to me, my friends at IANUS were watching my progress, even following the original material I was doing for ETERNITY; BROID gave way to CHASER PLATOON and then to GROUND ZERO, and they had begun to wonder what other tricks I had up in my sleeve. My only move was to send them an address correction for their mailing list one day, and the wheels began to turn.

ARKADYNE was a book I'd had in mind even before inventing BROID in 1987. Back then, it was only a stream of loosely-constructed paragraphs and concepts. But the overall "high concept" (as we say in the comics biz) was set in stone from the beginning. Revealing that now would ruin the comic for you, so just let me say that it was strong enough to fire my enthusiasm over five years. Fortunately for me, IANUS felt the same.

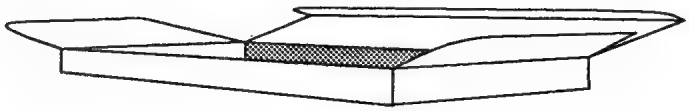
In 1990, my initial story ideas were given a shot in the arm by my friend and co-writer Jonathan Jarrard. As astute SF fan and technical writer, Jonathan wrote for me an extensive second draft that yielded a story ten times as engaging. For me it was like starting all over again, and my enthusiasm soared. The excitement we have for the project will definitely show this March when CYBERSUIT ARKADYNE #1 hits the stands.

You will be hearing and seeing more about ARKADYNE in these pages, so please also take the time to spread the word to your fellow SF fans and comic shop retailers. Much as the idea grates us, we are still the little fish in the big ocean of comicdom, and word of mouth is what we need to keep from getting gobbled. If the first [6-issue] series of ARKADYNE pays its own bills, the second [4-issue] series can roll right off the presses and bring the story to its conclusion. And if THAT does well... who knows? There are plenty more ideas tumbling around in this noggin.

Tim Eldred was at the head of the Ann Arbor Anime Organization from February 1988 to September 1990, also producing the club's newsletter, the gorgeous and informative ANIMANIA. Now, he still lives in Michigan, he's still a big anime/SF fan, and is a professional comic book artist.

CJP

LASER MEDIA



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BEN DUNN PART 2

This interview was realized last Spring at Project A-kon 2 (in Dallas) by Alain Dubreuil.

INTERVIEW WITH BEN DUNN

A.D.: What brought you to draw, and why choose the Japanese style?

B.D.: Actually, the Japanese style was a style that I adopted much later. When I was in junior high school and high school I read a lot of Marvel comics. Back then they were the only comics available. I did not know about *Cerebus* or *Elfquest*. I went to the 7-Eleven to buy my comics. The only other comics were DC, which sucked (to my point of view). Marvel comics were cool. Kids like to follow a trend, and comics are influential in that respect. They do affect what kids think. They do affect what they will do to learn in life. Most of the comics I read were harmless. Frank Miller was the first writer to really portray the dark and moody and violent type of comics. Before then it was pretty fluffy stuff, and I drew a lot of superhero comics. I was trying to go for the Neil Adams look, Barry Smith, Jack Kirby, all my favorite American artists. Then I got into Japanese animation and I realized there was some Japanese comics which I really liked.

I went to Taiwan, back in '77. Taiwan back then had very loose copyright laws, so they bootlegged a lot of Japanese comics, basically cutting out the Japanese balloons and sound effects and putting instead Chinese characters. I bought them and said, "Wow, b&w comics. How neat". I did not care about the fact that it was not in color. What really struck me about these comics was how violent they were. There's this man who has a bookstore in Taiwan — he did not think twice about selling me a comic where people's heads were getting chopped off, arms flying all over the place. My very first Japanese comic was a Gô Nagai comic, *Mazinger Z*. That book changed my opinion on comics forever, because there was a guy who drew a comic in a unconventional, dynamic style, who employed heavy doses of black, and used incredible techniques I had never seen before in comics. Also, he drew in a simpled enough style that I could copy it very easily. With Neil Adams, unless you go to a school and spend hours and hours trying to draw realistically and stuff like that, it takes a long time. Here was a guy who drew in a style I feel comfortable with. He did not care whether his characters looked realistic. He did not care whether or not his characters were believable. So I said, "I can do that, too". So I went into my giant robot phase for a while, and I'm still in it. The thing is, when I like something, I do not ever dislike it later on. I always stick by it.

A.D.: You add some new stuff, but you keep the old one in a safe spot.

B.D.: I always keep the old ideas going. I don't believe in just abandoning something later on. The only exception would be the Marvel comics. Again, the Marvel comics nowadays are not the same Marvel comics I bought when I was a kid. They are simply not the same. That's why I no longer have much respect for Marvel. Not only that, but I think that Marvel comics was a little more sincere those days. I think they really cared about the fans back then. Marvel was not selling millions of comics. They had to keep happy the people that were buying the books in those days. Now they are selling millions of copies. They do not care if they lose a hundred thousand, since they still sell nine hundred thousand, big deal. They know that whatever Marvel does it is going to make money, so they do not care anymore. Unfortunately, that's just the way it is. I don't have much respect for Marvel. Actually, now I have more respect for DC.

I adopted the Japanese style because I felt comfortable with it. I liked it. It gave me a lot of creative freedom. At that time, no one else was doing it. I went to conventions back in '83 and '84, no one knew what the hell "manga" was. I released *Mangazine* in late '84-early '85. They thought it was a play on "magazine". I had to explain to people what the word "manga" meant. No one knew. This is also when the only way to get a Japanese animation room was to set up a TV and VCR in your hotel room and convince people to come and watch it. Now we have here a big convention almost strictly devoted to Japanese animation, so you can see how much it has grown. Now everyone has a VCR and it helps a lot, too. The style I adopted is a synthesis of many styles, and I decided to go ahead. After a while I developed it and practiced it. I'm still changing it constantly. If you compare the early issues of *Ninja High School* with the later ones, it has changed dramatically since then. I have discovered new ideas and new techniques that I can employ in my own book. The trouble is that when you draw in the manga style too long, you forget how to draw realistically. I totally forgot how to draw realistic characters. The only way I would be able to get back to it is by spending a lot of time trying to draw a realistic kind of book. I do not care anymore. I just want to do what I am doing because it is fun and a lot of people seem to enjoy it. I enjoy it also. There really is no reasons for me to do anything else until the time when I feel the book no longer has anywhere to go, in which case I will probably end it and start something else.

A.D.: In that field, which artist influenced you the most?

B.D.: It's kind of hard to say. I know the artist by his work but not by his name. No one bothered to translate the names back then. As far as Japanese titles are concerned, I would say Gô Nagai heavily influenced my work. Miyazaki is one, Takahashi of course, the guy who does *Prefectural Earth Defense Force* also had a big influence on me. Matsumoto, of course, had also a big influence on me. The guy who did *Cyborg 009* was a big influence on my work, too. There was an *Ultraman* comic that I bought that was very good. The *Gaikin* comic was excellent. I was comic-crazy back then; I bought everything. If I liked it, I bought it. To me, those were the biggest influences. Whatever strikes my attention, I will use it if I can figure out how he does it.

A.D.: What are your proudest achievements?

B.D.: I will say *Mighty Tiny* by far. *Ninja High School* I like a lot, but that's more or less my way of just expressing things at the moment, just having fun and not caring whether or not I am doing anything to change society. I've always been a big anthropomorphic fan, and *Mighty Tiny* is my personal favorite. I am usually happy with all the achievements I do. I usually do my best work when I am doing it on my own, for myself. Unfortunately I have this tendency not to really apply myself really as I should on works that do not belong to me. I am guilty of that on several projects I worked on, like *Airboy*, *Sword of Texas* and even *Captain Harlock*. I really got into *Captain Harlock* for the first five or six issues. Robert Gibson's sort of storytelling was so incredibly intense, and I could not draw those kind of stories for very long. Robert Gibson for *Captain Harlock* was very well set. He knew exactly what he wanted. I ended up drawing the Arcadia twenty times before getting it right, and I got tired after a while. I really feel *Mighty Tiny* is a good series. I wish I could spent more time doing it, but unfortunately *Ninja High School* keeps me pretty busy. That is the reason why the series was late for a while — because I was working on *Mighty Tiny*.

I am working on a new series, probably for next year, called the *Adventures of Swimmer*, basically aimed at the same people who like the kind of storytelling that *Mighty Tiny* is. It is sort of an adventure story. The main theme is race relations, the thing I am most interested in right now. When the walls get smaller and there are more and more

people, there is going to be more and more friction created. There will be less jobs, less resources to go around, and more and more people to spread it all around. You are going to see more and more inequity, and there is going to be a disparity in income and in jobs, in allocations and resources, and because of that you will have a lot of little conflicts. I do not think the world will be destroyed by a huge nuclear holocaust or anything else. It is going to be weakened by constant fighting between groups, small groups, or individuals, because they cannot learn to live with each other and they cannot learn to share. Because, for the most part, people are just plain greedy. That is just the way it is: survival of the fittest. It may be a little heavy for a children's story, which I am primarily aiming this series at, but I feel that's something kids need to know. It's important. It's also a sort of a commentary on science's responsibility towards humanity. I am still working on this series, but it should come out sometime next year.

A.D.: This is why you are publishing yourself. You have ideas and you want to put them in stories even if they are not appealing to businessmen.

B.D.: Right. I do not have to sell a lot of comics to break even. It is more important to me just to do it.

A.D.: You are more happy to do that kind of story than one which is harmless and that sell a lot but that you do not relate to, in which you do not feel like putting something of yourself.

B.D.: Well, there are a lot of books which sell a lot of copies and that are very harmful, like X-rated books. There's some good ones out there, but there's also a lot of bad ones. A lot of retailers sell those things to kids. I don't have objections to them reading it, but the thing is that it's not very well done. They're conveying a very bizarre kind of message. For the most part, I would say that adult comics are not very well written. If they were, I would not mind kids reading them, if they would get something out of it. Not just contempt for women, which a lot of these so-called adult comics deal with. I don't like that, but it's just my personal opinion. I will not condemn the people who do like it and read it, because I think that in this country everyone has the right to read whatever they want to read.

A.D.: But if you take titles which are available to younger people, would you say there are quite a lot of them that will really make them think and put in perspective the society in which they are living, conformity and such? I do not see that much stuff which seems to achieve this goal.

B.D.: If you approach it very heavily, kids will lose interest in it. They will not learn anything anyway, so there's just no reason to do that. What you do is you present ideas in an entertaining fashion, and if you can teach them without them realizing that they are being taught, that is the key. Kids are a lot smarter than you realize. I think that if the people who entertain them approach them from the point of view of presenting ideas without having to talk down to them, it would work. *Mighty Tiny* was intended for just that aspect. I did not play down the violence. People still got killed in that series. But I did not exploit that violence. I just made them aware that it existed. It was more like an expression of friendship than anything else. How people can twist ideas in something for their own benefit. But anyway, that's one of the projects I am doing. Another one is called *Valhalla*. It is a book about fascism. How fascism, in itself, as a pure idea, is not that bad an idea. It actually works, much the same way that Marxism or socialism would work in a small enclosed setting. It's when it becomes corrupted by people who are totally evil, who want to exploit it to their own gain, that it goes wrong. Any idea becomes corrupted, no matter how it is or how good it may seem. Any idea which is corrupted will degenerate into an idea that is only for the benefit of the very few.

A.D.: Is it because you think that nature is somewhat like that — the fittest survives, the weakest dies, that way the race improves...

B.D.: Socialism tried to change that, but it goes against human nature, really. A lot of people I complain about, like Marvel and DC, I would not fight them for what they are doing, because if I was in the same position I would probably do the same thing. Maybe not. I know that people who have more power than me would want me to do that. I cannot blame Marvel and DC for what they are doing. They are just trying to make more money. The more money you make, the more power you have. That is the way things are run. How much control you can exert over other people. Comics have lost that entertainment attachment. Now it's just money, money, money. How much money can we make this time? *Mangazine* loses money every issue, but we keep it going because it is one of the few comics left, I believe, that allows creators to do what they wish. But at the same time we take an editorial direction; we don't just print anything and everything. Since it does not make money, we do not pay a lot for it and we do not get a lot of high-caliber talent. They just want to see their stuff printed. But *Mangazine* is one example. Another series I am writing mostly is *Asrial*, a mini-series with Robert De Jesus.

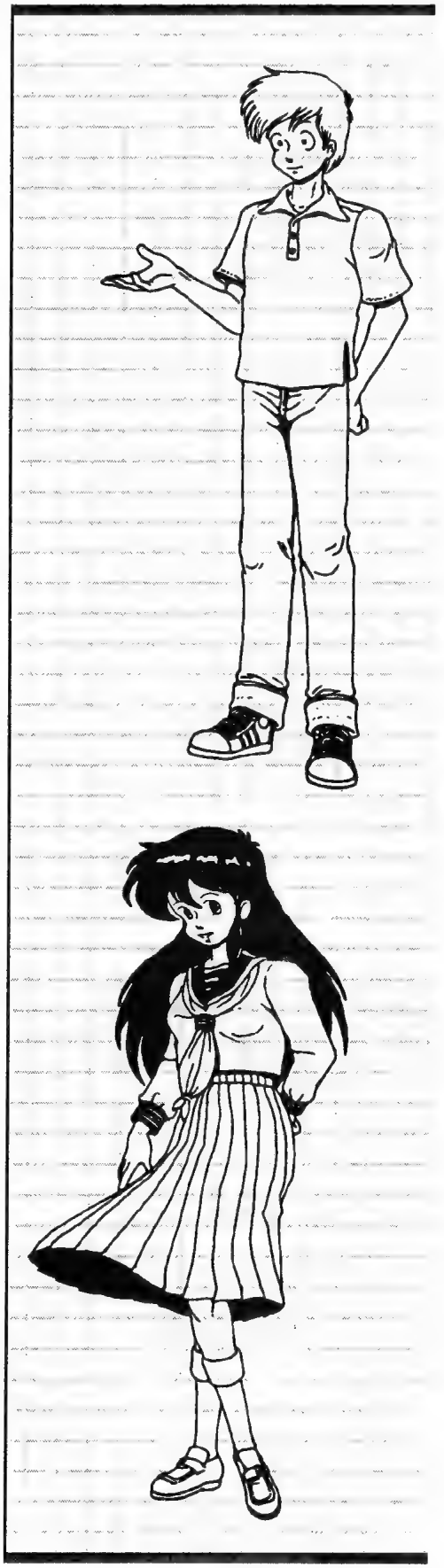
A.D.: I saw some artwork from him; he is quite good.

B.D.: I think he will be a hot artist. The only problem he has is that he is too slow. If he increases his output on a steady base, he could be incredibly popular.

A.D.: We received color copies of some of his works for the *Anime Shower Special*. It is not nudity but it is incredibly sexy. I was stunned by that.

B.D.: I'm surprised he has not found work with anybody else. I'm just lucky. He is now a friend of mine; we correspond frequently. He is working on the *Asrial* mini-series. It will explore family relations. Asrial has an older brother that was disowned by her father. Her brother is being blamed for something that he had no control over. Asrial's father abandoned her older brother because he was illegitimate. He did not ask to be born illegitimate. So it is strange how people do things like that. Through their own actions they blame somebody else. Of course, the thing will still be funny. I try to tell a really heavy story without it having to be preachy.

As far as *Ninja High School* is concerned, I just finished penciling #27. #25 and #26 explore relationships of females in our society, how we stress maleness over femaleness all the time. *Magical Mimi* is a three-part mini-series that explores how we perceive what is right and morally ethical based on our religious beliefs. Mimi is a witch (an earth witch, very communal with nature) but to most people she is still a witch. Most people will classify witches as being evil and anti-Christian. To me, any religion which does not believe in the Christian dogma is anti-Christian. So what are you going to do? Destroy all the religions? There is only one Christianity? What makes you



think that one religion is better than the other? Is it because of a simple majority? If that is true, the Muslim religion would be the predominant religion. It is not a matter of who is right or wrong, but whether or not and how well you can accept one type of belief over another. After that, there will be a big *Ninja High School vs the Giant monsters* storyline, which will coincide with the end of my contract with Eternity. That is an anti-nuclear war statement, except that I use monsters in an analogy with nuclear weapons. I will approach it in a pretty funny fashion, so that people will still be entertained. Comics are a business that has to be entertaining. Primarily that is their goal. If you can teach something while entertaining, that's even better. Explore new ideas that have not been touched or cannot be emphasized enough. Comics is an excellent medium for people to express ideas. Of course, every one has his own opinion. That and the belly button — everyone's got one.

Developing a project for me takes a long time. I had no idea that *Ninja High School* would last that long. I had ideas for *Valhalla* and others years ago. I never had the time to do them because I was caught up with NHS. I finally had the chance to put *Mighty Tiny* out; now I have to find the time to do those other things. We are doing a *Tigers of Terra* and NHS crossover. We are also doing *Ninja University*. It will be more for adults, an actual exploration of college life but from a very funny perspective. For the most part, campus comics explore more or less "How do I get to the next class before I have sex". What I want to explore is the actual process of how a student assimilates into a college. The only character from NHS in NU is Jeremy Feeple, about four years older. The girls go back home in this story so we do not see them in this series. The first issue is written, but I sent it back to the writer for revision. All three issues will probably be in the works pretty soon. Usually things turn out pretty good. *Tiger X* was weak, but I did not have time to develop the story. For NHS, I would have wished my art was as good at the beginning as it is now. It was kind of primitive. Actually, I've gotten people telling me that they prefer the art of the early issues. It is a matter of opinion.

A.D.: You have any last comments?

B.D.: Anyone who is interested in submitting to Antarctic Press should do it. We always try to write back to everyone who submits something, to give an analysis. Don't be discouraged by people who say no. Don't be discouraged if you don't get a lot of money for what you're doing. I have been in that boat; I know what it's like. Everyone at one time has been in that boat, unless they were incredibly talented and they got a job instantly with Marvel or DC. I don't think I am talented enough to work for either of those two companies. To be honest, I would not want to, because their books are limited to certain ideas.

A.D.: You do not want to be caged.

B.D.: It's like being in the wild and being in the zoo. In the wild you have the freedom of doing what you want, but you take your chances. In a zoo you are fed and cared for, you have nothing to worry about, but you cannot roam free. It is hard to choose — security or freedom. I also encourage people to submit things for the *NHS Yearbook* and for the *Girls of NHS*. I believe in new talents, I really do. I remember when I was trying to break in. There was no way; there was no outlet for me to expose my work. No one gave a darn about my work. When I tried to sell publishers the idea of doing manga in the early 80's, they were saying, "Japanese comics? We are not interested in that. What is this stuff? Oh, their eyes are too big. The're not drawn realistically." How quickly things can change if you work at it. Don't be afraid to express your ideas. Do it no matter what the others will think of it. No matter what you do, everyone will have opinions about it no matter what. No matter how popular or how unpopular it is, there will be people who will like it and other who will not or will not care. Unfortunately, most people don't care.

A.D.: So an artist that feeds too much on the appreciation of the readers is fragile in that aspect.

B.D.: Right.

A.D.: They should do it for themselves first, be happy to do it, and wait. In the long run they will get the recognition they seek.

B.D.: I guess it's true for some people; not for me, though. I do things that I enjoy, but I also have to think of the larger picture as well. What I enjoy has to stand the test of time. I want people to enjoy something ten years from now. It's true what you say; do the things for yourself to enjoy. When you get in the real world you will learn very quickly you've got to start basing your work on what the majority enjoys. I was experimenting in NHS. I did a couple of serious stories and they didn't do very well. I did Steamhead story where he is in Germany. I went back to the old standard of Jeremy, Asrial, and Itchy Koo getting into a bunch of messes with one another.

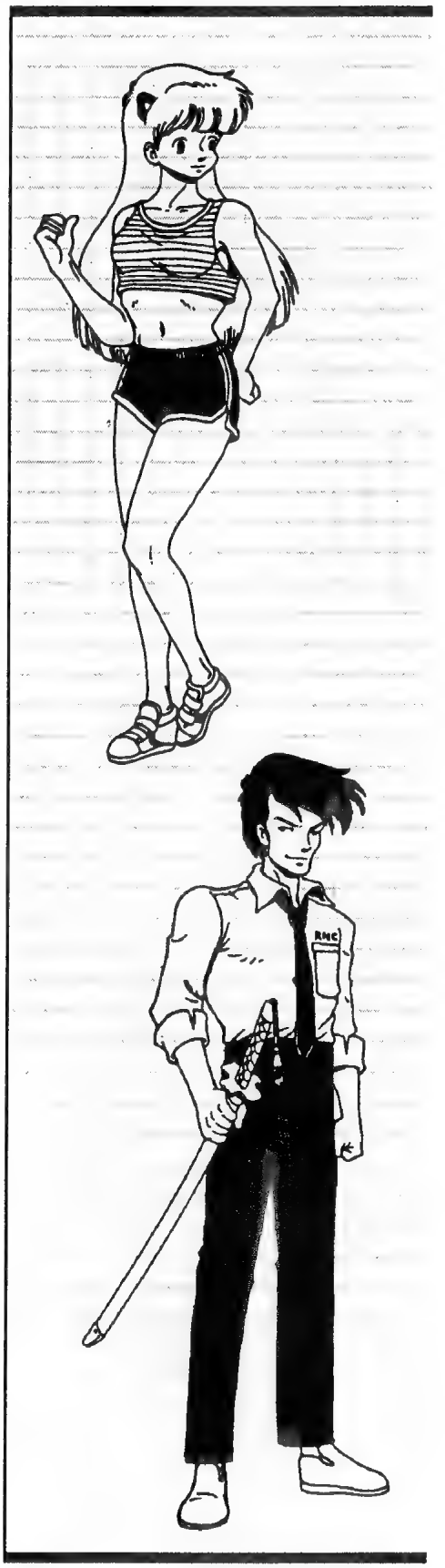
A.D.: So it is an in-between situation; you have to like what you are doing, but also get the people to like it too.

B.D.: Yes, you still have to make a living, that is true. I will not do something that I despise, even for some money — not yet. Even so, an artist has to consider the marketplace, about what is selling and what is not. If you can share your idea and it will sell, then you are in an ideal situation. Don't talk about what you want to do, DO it. Do not rely on your voice, rely on your actions. I like to draw to share ideas. I tried college for five years and I just gave up because I did not like it. My parents wanted me to get a steady job where I could collect a steady paycheck, report to work at nine, leave work at five. This was not a life for me. My father did not care: "you can do whatever you want as long as you're happy". My mother was the most reluctant one. She wanted me to finish college. The one thing they can say is that I have not begged them for any money in four years. I own my own house now, and my own car; I can go wherever I please. Not really in fact; I've still got to meet deadlines. But as long as you meet those deadlines, you are pretty much free. I get about a week out of every month to do nothing. It takes me three days to pencil an issue of NHS, two weeks to ink it.

A.D.: Three days to pencil?

B.D.: You should see my penciling; it is not very detailed. Most pencilers, what they pencil ends up being what they ink. Not so with me; I only pencil to let the letterer know where the balloons can go. When I get it back, I re-pencil it with more details and I ink it. I prefer that the letterer do his work before I ink. It is easier for me. I don't know how big the dialogues will be. If I do not leave enough space for the balloons, they will end up on the finished art.

A.D.: Thank you, Ben.



A MEKTON MAGICAL SYSTEM

by Claude J. Pelletier

PUT SOME MAGIC IN IT

I needed a magical system to define some characters in *Gates of Pandragon*. At first, I wanted to adapt an existing system (*AD&D, Shadowrun*) to *MEKTON II* (the best rules system for an anime/manga-like RPG: It's simple **and** realistic enough). I was engaging myself in a big job but it was worth it since several anime or manga are dealing with magic (*Outlanders, Aura Battler Dunbine, Bastard!!, Record of Lodoss War*, etc.) and that *Mekton* had no such system. I had just began to put some ideas on paper when *Mekton Empire* was released. I was really relieved: the psionic system that it contains was exactly what I needed. Because, you see, in my mind, psionic and magical abilities are two expressions of the same power. The psionic system of *Mekton Empire* gave me the basis to develop magic by establishing correspondance between the two kind of abilities and creating new spells. Here is what I propose.

MAGIC and PSIONIC are in fact the same thing. It only depends on your point of view. If you come from a modern civilization with a very rational and scientific basis, you will probably call it PSIONIC (and the chosen one entrusted with the special power will be call esper). If you come from a more primitive civilization, or from a society with strong mystical traditions, you will call it magic (and the people embodied with the power will be magician, mage, or wizard if you admire them, and sorcerer if you fear them).

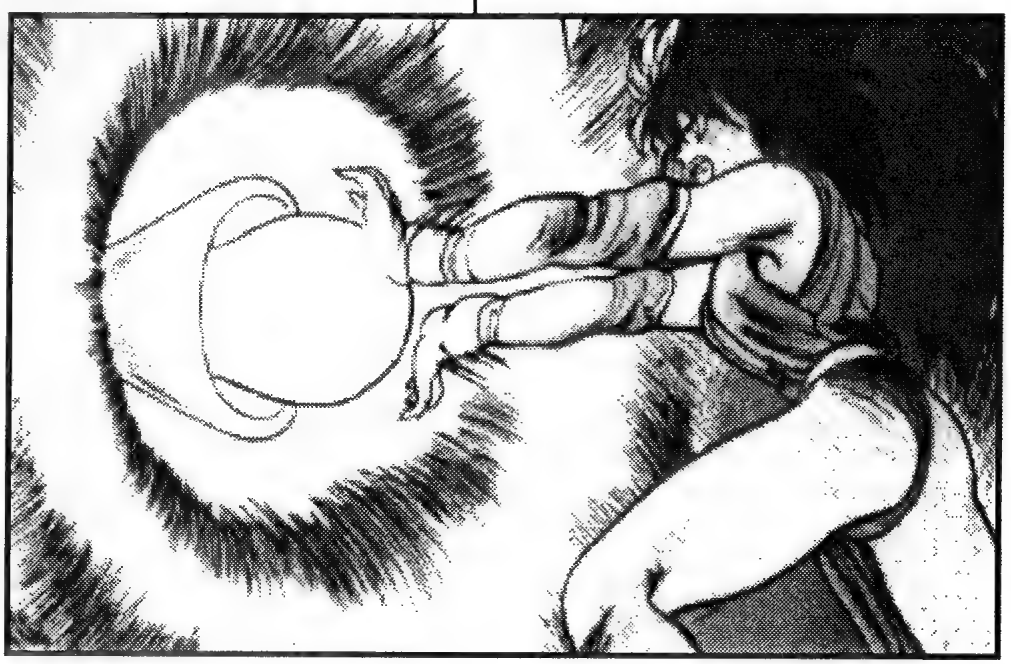
Magicians and espers uses the same power. It is a power immanent in the universe. It is everywhere and you can explain it as a mystical force linked to the Universe itself (the "soul" of the Universe, the consciousness of the planets or even the Force — as in "May the Force Be with you"!) or by an extension of the Unified Field Theory (if you are rational). The power is a quinti-dimensional force generated by the resonance of the Universe in its perpetual creation. This force is linked to the structure of the Universe (its lines of force — yes, like the Ley Lines in *Rifts* but I swear it I had this idea a couple of years ago, even before hearing of the latest Palladium Games) and are concentrated by planet-generated gravity well. The mombo-jumbo doesn't matter. All we know is that the power is linked to planets: nearer your are of a planet, bigger the planet is, the stronger you feel the power. When you move from one planet to another, you must adapt yourself to the specific "wave lenght" of the new planet before recovering the power.

How can magicians and espers use that power? They channel it more or less unconsciously. The process is a little too complex to explain but only people with the channeling potential can use the power. This potential is innate and cannot be developed (though sometimes it is unknown and can be "discovered"). It is your PSI or MAGIC POTENTIAL. They are both determined by the same way: an 11th ten-sided dice when rolling your Character Points (Cf. *Mekton Empire*, p. 109). From 2 to 4 points of Magic Potential you have no magic, with 5-7 points you have access to one magic skill category, with 8 points you have access to 2 skill categories, with 9 points to 3 skill categories and with 10 points you have access to all 4 skill categories.

Magical skills are "purchased" with Education Points and can be improved by "investing" Character Points. If you have access to a mage or someone with an higher level skill you can also learn a magical skill. Finally, it can be gained by a wild talent. In fact, it works exactly like a psionic skill (Cf. *Mekton Empire*, pp. 109-120). You use it the same way: stat (Magic Potential) + skill level + 1 ten-sided dice against a defending roll or a difficulty level.

It is important to precise that a character CANNOT use both psionic AND magic. They are two different conceptions of the same thing. If you are an esper and you want to move a glass of water, you will use your telekinesis skill (if you have it of course!) to change the gravitational vectors around the glass. An esper will not always be aware of all the mechanics of his/her power but he/she will rationalize better its use, knowing that the laws of physics are at play. A magician will move the glass by invoking magic. He/she doesn't know what happens to the glass but it works (if the roll is successful!). The magician concentrates or recites a formula (he/she don't know it but the formula has only the role of helping concentration: "All I know is that Buddha help you if you concentrate"!) to make magic work. That's all they know. A magician and an esper can work in a same party but they will never admit or suspect that they are using the same power with a different name. Their conception of it is too far.

The magical skills are either spells or magical abilities at will. The difference does not matter. The skill categories and prerequisites are the same than PSIONIC skills but wear generally different names. I will give the equivalence between them but refer to the "Psionic Skill Table" and "Psi-Potential-Based Skills Description" in *Mekton Empire* for more details (like the prerequisites). I will also give NEW psionic skills with their magical skills equivalence (noted by an *) and description.



MAGICAL SKILLS TABLE

PSIONIC	MAGIC
TELEPATHY	**PSYCHE (MIND)**
Telepathic Shielding	Mind Shield
Telepathic Reception	Mind Reading
Telepathic Sending	Mind Probe
Empathic Receiving/Sending	Emotion Reading/Probe
Mental Attack	Mental Blast
Telesuggestion	Mental Command
Mind Scramble	Confusion
Telesense	Sensorium Link
Image Projection	Projection
Telepathic	Illusion Illusion
Possession	Possession
*Fear	*Fear
*Sleep	*Sleep
*Invisibility	*Invisibility
*Glossolalia	*Glossolalia
*Animal Talk/Control	*Animal Talk/Control
ESP	**PNEUMA (SPIRIT)**
Danger Sensing	Detect Danger
Aura Viewing	Aura
Psychometry	Identify
Retrocognition	Knowing Past
Precognition	Divination
Clairvoyance	Clairvoyance Astral
Projection Astral	Projection
*Detect Psionic	*Detect Magic
*Intuition	*Intuition
*Environmental Sense	*Environmental Sense
PSYCHOKINESIS	**SOMA (MATTER)**
Telekinesis	Move Object
Pyrokinesis	Create fire
Telekinetic Punch	(Invisible) Fist
Telekinetic Shield	(Invisible) Shield
Telekinetic Throw	(Invisible) Hand
Telekinetic Flight	Levitate
Telekinetic Projectile	(Invisible) Canon
Psibody Telekinesis	Astral Body
Psychic Healing	Cure
Teleportation	Instant Travel
*Light	*Light
*Enhanced Pyrokinesis	*Fireball
*Control Energy	*Control Energy
*Energy Missile	*Energy Bolt
*Energy Shield	*Energy Shield
*Disable Molecular Link	*Disintegrate
*Reorganize Molecular Shape	*Shape
*Molecular Manipulation	*Transmute
SELF CONTROL	**ONTOS (BEING)**
Body Control	Meditation
Mecha Control	Link
Strength Focus	Strength
Self Healing	Self Healing
Reflexes	Boost Awakening
*Night Vision	*Infravision
*Metamorphose	*Shape Change

GENERAL RULES:

The rules are the same for most spells, unless stated otherwise.

Duration. All magic skills last as long as you concentrate (concentration is more or less easy according to your base roll on a skill: stat + skill. Higher is the base roll, easier is the concentration factor).

Range. The range (in human hex) is eqal to 1 + skill level (e.g.: Fear lvl 2 = range of 3 hex). You can affect a subject that is hidden if you are well aware of its presence. Thick walls can block some spells.

Limitation. In the same day (or a period preceded by at least a six hours rest), you can perform as many spells as your Magic Potential allows (minimum 5, maximum 10) and a spell can be used as many times as its level.

Drain. For every spell casted beyond this limitation, the caster is drained of one hit to the head (shock & stun rule applicable). At 0 hit to the head (if you're still conscious and have not crumbled under the headache!), you can continue to take drain to the torso. At each loss you must make another shock/stun roll. You can lose as many hits as your Magic Potential. Beyond this amount of hits, any other drain could be fatal. At this point, the shock/stun roll determines if the loss is lethal or not. The automatic drain of some spells are cumulative with the exhaustion drain.

Recovery. You stay unconscious as long as you haven't recovered one head hit. The drained hits are not real damage and are recovered at a rate of one hit per hour of sleep.

In a future issue we will publish an article by Jean Carrières defining optional psionic/magic rules for concentration and some general modifiers (range, number of targets, and mass).

MAGICAL SKILLS DESCRIPTION:

For all magical skills having a corresponding psionic skill, refer to the description of the psionic skills in *Mekton Empire*. Here are the descriptions and prerequisites for all new magical skills (and for their psionic correspondent).

PSYCHE SKILLS

Fear: This is a more specific use of Mental Command. You induce fear in the mind of the subject. Mental Command is prerequisite. The effect lasts two complete turns.

Sleep: Another specific use of Mental Command (which is also pre-requisite). You induce the subject to sleep. The effect lasts as long as the recipient is not awakened.

Invisibility: You are affecting the mind of people around you to make them ignoring your presence. You are not really invisible. Mind Probe is prerequisite. A more specific use of Illusion. Concentration needed. You cannot make any attack and it doesn't affect any subject whose presence is ignored or shielded.

Glossolalia: This is the ability to speak languages that you don't know. With a mind link you instantly acquire the knowledge of the language spoken by another person or you can make another person learn your own language. The duration is limited to one day (the spell acts only on the temporary memory). Mind Reading and/or Probe are prerequisite. If the recipient is of the opposite sex, a kiss is required. Otherwise, touching is enough.

Animal Talk: You can mentaly talk with any non-human creatures. Mind Reading and Probe are prerequisite.

Animal Control: You can make any non-human creature with a low level of intelligence obey your mental command. Mental Command is prerequisite.

PNEUMA SKILLS

Detect Magic: You can feel if magic is being used currently (and detect Mind Reading, Mental Blast, Confusion, Projection, Illusion, Possession, any SOMA spell, Strength, Awakening and Shape Change). You can detect if magic has been used for a period of an hour or if someone is a magician (you feel the power in him/her). Detect Psionic works the same way. As Psionic and Magic use the same energy, a magician could have chance to detect psionic (on GM choice) and vice-versa. Not a spell but a magical ability. Concentration is needed though.

Intuition: This skill has a power level between Detect Danger (which is prerequisite) and Precognition. Sometimes you can feel that something will happen, not necessarily a threatening situation (as for Detect Danger), but it works only for the immediate future. You don't have a clear picture of the event and may not even be aware of the exact nature of the event. You just have the feeling (without any reason) that an action is right or wrong. Like in "I have a baaaad feeling about this" or "I think we should turn right". Not a spell but a magical ability. Concentration is needed.

Environmental Sense: This skill gives you a special awareness in a natural environment. It's a kind of commune with nature: you feel the presence of a beast, know the weather, predict earthquakes, etc. Not a spell but a magical ability. Concentration is needed.

SOMA SKILLS

Light: A variation of the pyrokinesis skill. You can produce a cold fire that only makes light. You can control intensity. Pyrokinesis is prerequisite. Concentration needed.

Fireball: You can ignite a sphere of air and throw it away making damage: 1d10 hits in an area of 1 hex. You can't make more than one fireball per hour or you will suffer a drain of 1 hit of damage for each extra spell. Pyrokinesis and (Invisible) Hand are prerequisite.

Control Energy: This spell (or this psi ability) permits you to gather part of the energy dissipated in your surrounding (you can extract pure energy from atomic, electrical, cosmic energy) and to use it. This ability has little use in itself (you can power an electric device, give a shocking grasp (inflicting 1 hit of damage by touching an adversary), and several other uses you can think of and make your GM approve) but it is an important prerequisite for several powerful spells. Telekinesis and pyrokinesis are prerequisite. Concentration needed.

Energy Bolt: This is an anti-mecha spell. You concentrate a certain amount of energy and throw it on the adversary in the form of a beam, doing 2K of damage. You may have a chance to shut down the engine of the mecha for a short time or to stun the pilot (chance and duration on GM choice). This spell is so powerful that it takes a tremendous amount of your own energy to produce and control it. Each bolt drains you 2 points of damage. Control Energy is prerequisite.

Energy Shield: This is the ultimate defence against projectiles and energy weapons. It raises before you a curtain of energy that will stop any physical attack inflicting damage equal to or less than 2K. It drains you 1 point of damage each time for a small shield (torso/head protection) and 2 points for a complete shield. The duration of the spell is 6 turns (1 minute). Shield and Control Energy are prerequisites.

Disintegrate: This spell allows you to disintegrate permanently any kind of matter. It drains you 1 BODY TYPE point per 50 kilograms of matter disintegrated. If you use it as a psionic ability, you disable the atomic link between molecules and reduce the matter affected to atomic dust. Control Energy is prerequisite.

Shape: This spell allows you to sculpt any kind of matter, giving it any form you want. Only the shape of the matter is affected not its nature. If you sculpt iron it will still be iron, the molecular structure is unchanged. It drains you of 1 BODY TYPE point per 50 kgs of matter shaped for a duration of two hours per level. Control Energy is prerequisite.

Transmute: This is the ultimate Soma spell. It is total control of matter. You can transmute air into water, water into wine, rock into mud, lead into gold, anything. You manipulate atomic structure at will, changing Proton and Electron numbers, reorganizing atomic links. It drains you 1 BODY TYPE point per 50 kgs of matter transmuted for an entire day (or you need a full eight-hour sleep recuperation). Duration is one hour per level. Disintegrate is prerequisite.

ONTOS SKILLS

Infravision: This skill allows you to see at night. The vision is not perfect but it amplifies very dim light and heat sources. Meditation is prerequisite. Not a spell but a magical ability. Concentration is needed.

Shape Change: With this skill you can change your appearance at will as long as it is a life-form of the same type and weight (if you're human you can change only into a carbon-based life-form as near as possible to the vertebrate order on Earth). As you are only reshaping your matter without changing its nature you must keep the same mass. You must know or have seen at least once the shape (in 3D) that you want to take. This transformation drains you 1 BODY TYPE point for a duration of three hours. The effect is **permanent** unless an other spell reverses it. Meditation and shape are prerequisite.

NOTE:

For the soma skills using **Control Energy** I can suggest to GMs a system of Difficulty Levels to scale the amount of energy available: DL 10 = 10 watts, 15 = 100 Wa, 20 = 1,000 Wa, 25 = 10,000 Wa, 30 = 100,000 Wa. With **Energy Shield** you can scale the amount of energy that the shield can absorb (5 hits, 1 K, 1.5, 2, 2.5). With **Disintegrate** and **Shape** the maximum weight of matter affected can be determined by this formula: 20 kgs * $2^{(DL/5)-2}$. The damage made by the **Energy Bolt** can be determined with a similar formula: Dam = $2^{(DL/5)-2}$ * 5 hits.

The drain generated by casting an **Energy Bolt** can also be determined with a Difficulty Levels system. Dam = DL/10 hits, rounded down. In case of Body Type drain, if the caster abuses its power and is drained to BT 0, then he/she falls unconscious. The BT can be recovered at a rate of one per day.

Of course, this is only suggestions and GMs are free to use them or not. Thanx to Jean Carrières for his advice, to the people of *Mordred* for their comments, to Guy McLimore & Co. for *Mekton Empire*, and to *Mekton*'s creator Mike Pondsmith for providing such a cool game.

If you have any comments, ideas, new spell descriptions, or suggestions for any other optional rules, don't hesitate to send it to us. It will be a pleasure to share it with all our readers. However, most of the future gaming articles will be published (to concentrate it at the same place) in our mecha/gaming magazine: *MECHA•Press*.

This article was first published in the APA *Mordred* #6.

RECORD OF LODOSS WAR

Record of Lodoss War is a series of thirteen 30-minute OVAs.
Author: Ryo Mizuno
Original work: Hitoshi Yasuda

Introduction

"The era when gods were thought to be glorious had come to an end. The clashing between the armies of Falis, the god of light, and Falalis, the god of darkness, split the heavens in two. In the seemingly unending battle, the earth lamented, and the oceans trembled with fear. The last clash between the survivors, Marfa, the goddess mother of creation, and Kardis, the malevolent godess of destruction, echoed to the ends of the earth. At the end of the extremely fierce battle, a continent separated, newly forming a land for which both the gods of light and darkness reached the end of their lives' threads. Several thousand years later, the land located to the south of the continent, Araycrust, is called the cursed island, 'Lodoss.'"

History

Five thousand years before the present date, the gods waged war against each other. The leaders were Falis and Falalis. In his eagerness to dominate, Falalis, using his weapon, called upon Falis to a duel. Falis did not want to battle against Falalis, but he had no other choice, since the call of the weapon was not to be ignored. Thus, the war of the gods began. Falalis called upon the other gods, dragons, and evil creatures of the land to help him fight against the light, while Falis did the same in retaliation against the darkness. The war waged on; many of the gods and others lost their lives in the battle. Near the end of the battle, only two gods remained. One was Marfa, and the other was Kardis. In their struggle to survive, they fought for the glory that was to be determined. In their struggle, they separated the continent, Araycrust, forming a new land which slowly drifted south and was later to be known as the cursed island Lodoss. Their clashing drew them both to their deaths, bringing the era of the gods to an end.

About thirty years before the present date, darkness had once again taken over the land, and the whole island was under the rule of the Dark. The ruler was known as the "Demon Lord," but in actuality, the "Demon Lord" was Kardis. Kardis had succeeded in resurrecting himself to serve Falalis and to bring chaos and turmoil to Lodoss. He dwelled within the labyrinth of Marmo, an island province located south-east of Lodoss. He ruled from the far reaches within Marmo, creating havoc and destruction on Lodoss. A selected one hundred warriors, knights, and others heroes had gone down within the labyrinth only to be turned into cold corpses by the dangers within or by the hands of Kardis. However, seven heroes, who joined together from the far reaches of the land, dared the labyrinth of Marmo, successfully going through it to challenge Kardis. The battle against Kardis was long and arduous. The heroes succeeded in defeating him, but not killing him. They put him to sleep once more, trapping him within the labyrinth. Yet the cost was great, for they lost one of their band in doing so. The six heroes had finally conquered the evil menacing the land, bringing with them a new peace and order upon Lodoss. They also brought the light back to the land. And with this, they were known by everyone as the "Six Heroes."

The "Six Heroes" are Fawn, a knight, presently known as the King of Vallis; Neese, a priestess of the goddess Marfa; Flaivae, king of the dwarves but now deceased; Wart, a sorcerer who is presently a great sage living alone in Moss; Beld, another knight, presently Emperor of Marmo and leader of the evil forces across Lodoss; and Karla, a sorceress who is called the "Grey Witch." These people are the "Six Heroes," yet Beld and Karla have given up their status as heroes to become what they are now. The reason for their forfeiture of title is slowly revealed throughout the story. Now, Beld leads another army of destruction across Lodoss, while Karla toys with both sides, tipping the scale to her ways.

Description

Lodoss is a land that was separated from the continent of Araycrust centuries ago and so became an island. It has faced many disasters since its formation after the battle between the gods. Thus, many incidents have occurred often on the island, tipping the balance between good and evil.

The story within "Record of Lodoss War" takes place during a time when the island is trembling from an unknown power, and evil forces have gone out onto the island to conquer over the peaceful, tranquil cities within the nations of Lodoss, bringing chaos and destruction. For thirty years, Lodoss has not experienced such a turmoil as this, until now, for this war happens to be a repetition of the war of the gods.

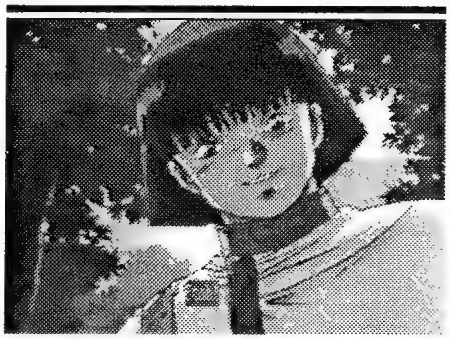
A band of six adventurers travel throughout Lodoss to seek Wart, to find out the truth about the situations on Lodoss, Lodoss's trembling, and Karla. They venture forth from Alania, in the north-east of Lodoss, and continue their way through many hazards and confrontations.

Characters

There are many important characters in Lodoss. The following ones have been seen in the first six episodes. The six adventurers that are travelling on Lodoss are Pern, Deedrit, Eto, Slayn, Gim, and Woodchuck. These are the main characters within the story, but predominantly, Pern and Deedrit are the protagonists.

Pern, an eighteen year old human, leads the party from the country town of Alania through various hazards on their journey toward Wart's castle. He is a knight just like his father Tetheus, who served under King Fawn. Also serving under King Fawn, Pern wants to become a heroic knight like his father, which is why he left home for the journey. He wears his father's armour in his memory, because he admires his father's knighthood. Although Pern wants to be a knight, he is untrained at first. He has no knowledge of swordsmanship, and so he does not know how to use his bastard sword well in fights. And when he does fight, he is overzealous, charging toward the opponent who easily defeats him. In time, he is taught by many people how to fight properly, and he learns quickly. That is why he admires King Kashew because of Kashew's expertise with a sword in fights. As the journey progresses, he slowly begins to like Deedrit, but he does not outwardly show his affection for her.

Deedrit is a female high-elf who comes from the "Unforgettable Forest." She is about one hundred sixty years old. In elf years, her age constitutes her as a so-called "teenager," a time where she is "boy-crazy." This is why when she first meets Pern, she falls in love with him, even though Pern is a little shy when it comes to being romantic with her or having a relationship with her. It might be said that she joins the group because she finds an interest in Pern's way of thinking, but it is more her attraction towards him than anything else. Deedrit sometimes can get an uneven temper, especially when she tries to attract Pern's attention (only to be ignored), and can become jealous of the person that attracts his attention. She does not get along with dwarves well, because her race and the dwarves had never got along since the beginning, living in the same forested areas. This is why she and Gim are always arguing and trying to out-best each other. Yet she does care for him because he has become like a family unit within the group. Her magic comes from her belonging to the shaman class, for she utilizes the power from the spirits, calling on them in order to make her magic work for her. She uses her silhouette rapier in combat more than her magic. Sometimes she is called "Deed" by some people.



Eto is Pern's best childhood friend and is the same age. He is a novice cleric and left home to study their arts. His sole purpose is to heal people, though he does carry a mace for necessary fights. He eventually marries Fianna, King Fawn's daughter, and becomes the next king of Vallis after Fawn's death.

Slayn is a twenty-five years old sorcerer who graduated from the Institute of Magic, where he learned his magic from a wise old man. He has been friends with Gim for a long time which is why he joins the party. His magic is extremely strong but he has not been able to catch up on his readings. And so he is still a little inexperienced at spell-casting and needs to read to memorize and master the spells. His spell power does help out the party in very tight situations when needed, but the more he uses his power, the weaker he becomes. When he does not use magic, he fights with a dagger.

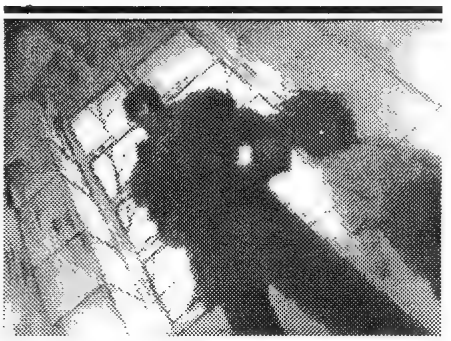
Gim is about sixty years old and a dwarven warrior. He and his ancestors are dwellers within the woods like the elves are, which is why his race and the elves do not get along well. He doesn't like Deedrit, but recognizes that she is part of the group. He does not judge a person by race alone, and he knows that he has to coexist with her in order to accomplish his task in the journey. His fighting ability belies his age. He fights with fierceness, brandishing his battle-axe, always jumping into action to help out the party, even if the danger is more than he can handle. One of these actions leads him to his death in the second half of the series. As mentioned, he is close friends with Slayn. Gim is devoted believer of Marfa like the priestess Neese, another of his friends. Like many of his ancestors, he is also an accomplished craftsman, for he has the ability to teach his craft to anyone. As for his personality, he has a stubborn character, however, he does not have a spiteful character.

Woodchuck is a forty years old human scout who joins the party after the fall of Castle Mise. "Scout" is not a really good classification for him. He leans more toward, in laymen's terms, the classification of a "thief" or "chivalrous robber." What got him into the dungeon in Castle Mise was his so-called profession. He is released by a general pardon and joins Pern's group, thinking that he can strike it rich if he stays with the group. Like all thieves, he is sneaky when it comes to making money. He carries with him a short sword and a dirk which become really handy for fights. The name, Woodchuck, is only his nickname; his true name is Jay Lancart; however, many people call him "Wood."

There are many other characters as well; GOOD, NEUTRAL, AND EVIL.

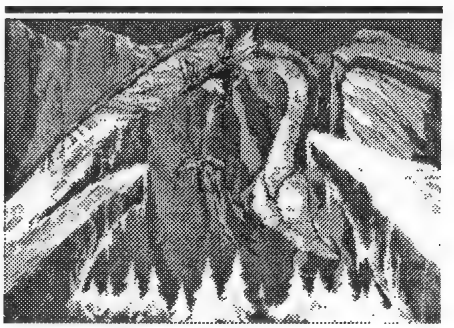
King Fawn is one of the "Six Heroes" who defeated the evil Kardis at Marmo. He is king of Vallis, which he rules from his stronghold. He is the most respected and the highest king of all the nations on Lodoss, where some people call him the "White King." He has a daughter, Fianna, his only child whom he cherishes. Presently, he regrets much about the position as King he took about thirty years ago, since he has caused a lot of pain for many, especially Pern. Fawn will later be killed by Beld, his arch enemy and ex-companion.

King Kashew is a thirty-three years old ex-mercenary soldier who quickly rose in his ranks to become, now, king of Flaim, a nation situated north-west of Vallis. That is why he is sometimes known as the "King of Mercenary Soldiers." He is Fawn's best friend, having a good rapport with him, though Kashew is Fawn's subordinate. He has various characters. In the past, he was full of jokes. Now, he sometimes may appear spiteful but will later on break out in a roaring laughter. Nevertheless, if he was given the opportunity to be a hero, he would have been a great hero, for in combat, he loves to use his bastard sword with which he is expert. This is why he teaches Pern how to use it because Pern carries the same weapon and needs to know how to fight with it.



Tetheus is Pern's father. He was a heroic knight who served under Fawn but lost his standing in the eyes of the king when he purposely went against Fawn's orders not to take the latter's daughter back, even though he wanted her, from Lord Jester of Moss because he was under a contract. Yet there was more to his loss of honour with King Fawn that is not presently known. Tetheus died when Pern was young without Pern's knowing why. Fawn may know the reason behind his death.

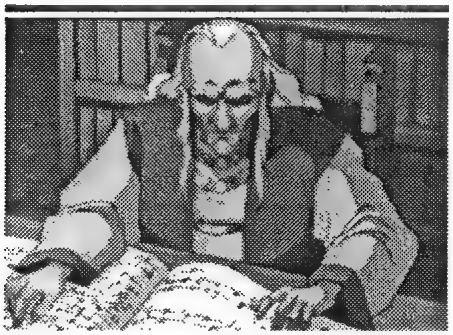
Neese is a priestess who worships Marfa. She is also one of the "Six Heroes" who defeated Kardis. Through their beliefs in Marfa, she and Gim have become friends. She has a daughter, Lairia, whom was abducted from the Temple of Marfa by an unknown entity. Also, she has an ancient dragon, Bromd, as a friend.



Bromd is one of the few ancient dragons who survived the gods' war five thousand years ago. He is but one of the five ancient dragons still alive on Lodoss. He dwells under the Temple of Marfa and guards Neese, his human friend.

Princess Fianna is Fawn's daughter and only child. In any way possible, she helps her father in state matters. She later falls in love with Eto and marries him.

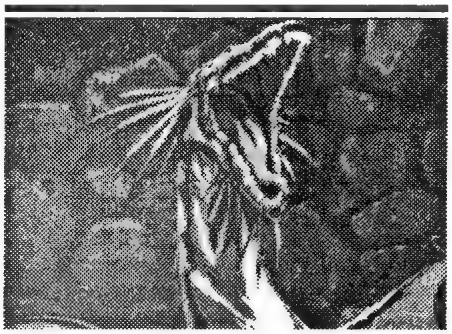
Lord Jester lives in Moss. In the past, he had depended on King Fawn to prevent Shooting Star, another ancient dragon, from destroying his village upon on which he and Fawn had made an agreement.



Wart is an old man who lives by himself in Moss. He is another one of the "Six Heroes" who defeated Kardis. During that time, he was a sorcerer who came from the nation of Canon, but now, he is a sage with bountiful wisdom and knowledge. With his knowledge, he becomes somewhat of an egocentric who cares more about his readings than anything else. He knows all about occult matters, such as information on Karla. His one hobby is writing.

Karla, a.k.a "The Grey Witch," is a human sorceress who has been living for about five hundred years. In this time, she has manipulated the history from the era of the old kingdom. She does this because she wants the world to fit her desires. It is even said that she had manipulated the events that lead to the resurrection of Kardis and the joining of the seven adventurers. On her forehead, she wears a golden circlet in which she traps her victims. With their souls in her circlet, she can continue her existence on the material plane. Her current victim is Lairia, Neese's daughter, where Karla has taken her body and has placed Lairia's soul in her circlet. Her magic is not pure, so it can be said that she dips into black magic from which she gains a lot of power. The main purpose for all her manipulations and interference is to tip the balance between good and evil.

Beld, emperor of Marmo, is also one of the "Six Heroes." Yet he forfeited his title to become ruler for the dark forces, leading them across Lodoss. His desire is to rule Lodoss, and the only person he knows that can stop him is Fawn, whom he challenges to a duel. Unfortunately for Beld, he is killed by Karla.



Narss is another ancient dragon on Lodoss. He is currently sleeping within a deep hole in Marmo. Somehow, he has Kardis sleeping within him, but he has nothing to do with the revival of Kardis.

Ashram, also called the "Black Knight" because of his deep black armour and the way he fights, serves under Beld. He is the true ringleader of the battle against Lodoss's towns and castles, leading dark forces against the armies of Lodoss, bringing chaos and destruction. Besides war, he has a love interest with Pirotess, a female dark-elf. After Beld's death, he becomes the next emperor of Marmo.

Vagnard is a sorcerer, serving under Beld. Somehow, he gets contacted by Kardis and begins to put forward his self to the god. He then becomes a middleman to Kardis's revival after thirty years of sleep.

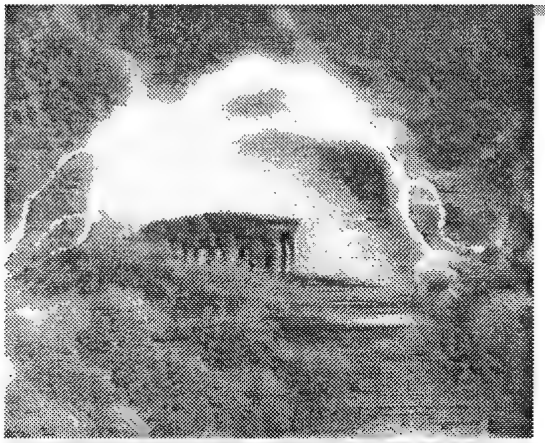
Pirotess is a dark-elf who looks exactly like Deedrit. She helps Ashram for whom she has affection.

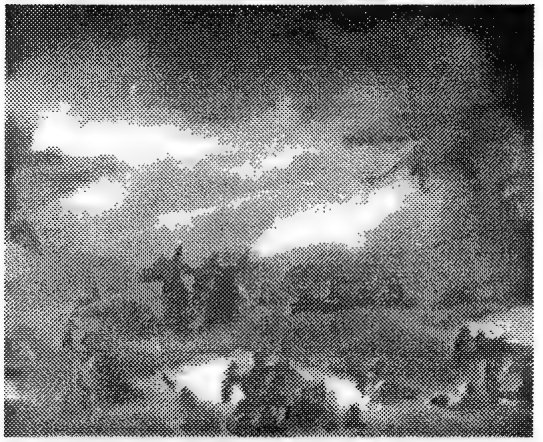
NOTE:

Translating from Japanese requires a certain amount of interpretation, particularly when it comes to names. The author of the article choose one manner to render the names of the characters, but there are other interpretations of equal value. There are no transcriptions better than any others — only transcriptions more widely accepted. In this case, before having everybody complaining, I must admit that the chosen names are not always the most accepted, but I have respected the choices of the author. We see most often names like Deedlit, Parn, Ghim, Etoh, or Kershew. It is just a question of point of view.

You have probably also noticed that the characters are strongly "inspired" by the game Dungeons & Dragons. The races and character classes are easily identifiable: Deedlit is a Druid/Bard Elf (called a shaman in the story), Parn is a Human Paladin, Ghim is a Fighter Dwarf (called a Forest Dwarf), Slayn (his last name seems to be Starseeker, which is inscribed on his staff) is a Human Wizard, Etoh is a Human Cleric, and Woodchuck a Human Fighter/Thief (called a Scout). The story even bears resemblance to some AD&D modules. We thought of making character's stats for the AD&D system, but TSR Inc. didn't approved. Maybe we will do them later for Mekton.

CJP





KEYWORDS

Lodoss

The reason for Pern and his friends' journey can be traced from a span of five thousand years. Near the end of the battle between Marfa and Kardis in which they had carried the violence on to the extreme, Kardis put a curse of decay on the Earth. Marfa tried to cleanse the curse from the land with water, but the curse made the land separate. The battle ended with both of them dying. The separated land became known as the cursed island, "Lodoss," which was the land where Marfa died. The offshore island from Lodoss, Marmo, was the ground where Kardis died.

War of the Gods

The clashing between Marfa and Kardis that gave birth to Lodoss was just one aspect of the scope of the war of the gods. The most important participants were Falis, the god of light, and Falalis, the god of darkness. The battle had also involved the other gods, all the dragons, and creatures of all kinds, siding with either light or darkness. The last survivors, Marfa and Kardis, waged a massive duel which in the end brought them also to their deaths. Thus, the era of gods ended. Vallis is a nation which pays homage to Falis. Marmo aims to conquer Lodoss in Falalis's name. The war of the gods, five thousand years ago, is now being repeated.

Ancient Dragons

Talking about dragons is complicated since there are various kinds of dragons living on Lodoss. The supreme dragons, also known as ancient dragon lords, were equal to the gods, but now, they are seemingly being destroyed to extinction. There are five of them still alive on Lodoss: Bromd, Narss, Shooting Star, Mysen, and Aybra. According to the governor from the old, perished kingdom, each one now can cast spells such so as to protect their treasures. A person who takes their treasure can gain tremendous power as seen in the second half of the story where Shooting Star's treasure holds an important meaning.

Elf

The meaning of elf was originally "dwellers of the forest." Unlike the humans who were created by the gods, the elves' existence was summoned from the world of the fairies by the gods. The elves are a divided race of two distinct groups, the high-elves and the dark-elves, which became enemies during the war of the gods. The high-elves were on the side of the light, and the dark- elves were on the side of the darkness. They are adepts with short swords and bows. Their swordsmanship can even surpass the knights'. They know how to wield magic which comes from the power of the spirits. Their lifespan can exceed one thousand years. One distinguishing elven feature is their uneven temper.

The Malevolent Goddess, Kardis

Kardis, the malevolent goddess of destruction, was defeated by Marfa and died on the island of Marmo. However, Kardis has been trying to resurrect herself in response to the war on Lodoss. Vagnard becomes her puppet, and she works her way to use Ashram after Beld's death. There are two conditions to Kardis's resurrection. One is the copper of control that Shooting Star protects. So then, a person who takes it could manipulate the power of Kardis.

The Legend of the Six Heroes

Kardis had once again tried to revive herself onto this world. To prevent that from happening, six heroes enclosed Kardis again deep within the earth. One of the heroes was Fawn, king of Vallis. The others were: Beld, emperor of Marmo, Flaivae, the king of the presently perished kingdom, Wart, the sage who is living in Moss now, Neese, the priestess of Marfa, and Karla, the Grey Sorceress. Out of the six members, only Beld was seduced by Kardis after the battle, and as Emperor of Marmo, he made the war occur.

The Witch, Karla

Within five hundred years, the Grey Witch has done secret manoeuvres in the shade of many wars that occurred in Lodoss. Her body has perished long ago, and her spirit lives because of her circlet. She is now controlling Neese's daughter, Lairia, possessing the body of Lairia whose soul is trapped within the circlet. Even if she is one of the "Six Heroes," Karla positively promotes war because she believes that the world could be destroyed with a tip of the balance between good and evil. And thus, many tragedies have repeated themselves.

Creatures of Lodoss

Various creatures live on Lodoss. Out of all of these creatures, the commonest are the small creatures, the goblins and the kobolds. As members of the Marmo army, they appear completely evil. In the first episode, the gargoyles that appeared are magical, living, stone-statue creatures that come to life. An attack with a sword cannot easily destroy them (Slayn repulsed them with his magic). Creatures have many characteristics in supporting roles in the story. And they largely populate all of Lodoss.

SYNOPSIS

Episode 1: "Prologue to the Legend"

Pern and his companions walk through the drizzly weather of the rain. They stop before the entrance to the "Great Dwarves' Tunnel," knowing that they have to go through the tunnel to get to Wart. Then they continue on walking. Deedrit stays back for a while, looking on, but decides to follow.

Upon entering, they all take off their raincloaks and view the deserted, rotted interior of the tunnel. Woodchuck begins to comment about it, while Slayn later comments about it's existence. Deedrit comments her view on the smell of the place. Gim yells at her for saying such a thing, telling her that she can stay behind. Eto interrupts their bickering. Pern joins in, telling Deedrit that she can stay or follow. Once again, Eto comes in to stop an argument. All of a sudden, stone statues of gargoyles within the tunnel entrance come to life. They attack the six members. Pern and the rest except for Woodchuck gather all around, protecting each others' backs, defending against attacks made by the gargoyles. Woodchuck, on the other hand, happens to be caught by surprise by a gargoyle that flew right up to him on the catwalk. The gargoyle attacks him, pushing Woodchuck over the edge. They both fall over, while the gargoyle tries to bite at Woodchuck who is holding the gargoyle by the throat to keep it away from him. He takes out his dirk and slashes at the gargoyle before they land on the ground, keeping the gargoyle's body beneath him while they land. The others try to hit the gargoyles but to no avail. Slayn points out a tunnel, telling everyone to leave. They do, and then he begins a spell, while the gargoyles fly around for another attack. The spell he creates swirls around him, creating a barrier. The gargoyles attack and the spell repulses them back, turning them back into stone, to crumble onto the floor. The spell continues until all the gargoyles turn to dust.

In a craft's room, Woodchuck is admiring an unfinished work made by the dwarves, wishing that he could sell it if only it was finished. Deedrit, on the other hand, tries on a gold, ornamented necklace, asking Pern for his opinion which he thinks is a waste of time. Eto interrupts before she explodes, complimenting her on her look. A little while later, Slayn comes in, exhausted, telling everyone that an evil presence is interfering.

At another place in Moss, on the west side of Lodoss, an old man sits behind a desk within a castle library, reading a tome. A gust of wind suddenly blows within the room, and a woman suddenly materializes into the air. The old man, Wart, demands to know who she is and she tells him that she is the person that he saved from the labyrinth thirty years ago, shocking him. She explains her absence of age to him.

Back within the tunnel, the party walks through a it, led by Gim. Pern wonders how long it will take before they reach the exit. Slayn explains to him that they should have confidence in Gim's intuition, while Woodchuck entrusts Gim to lead them out safely. However, Deedrit does not trust his intuition. They pass a piece of gold craftwork that attracts Deedrit. She goes over to examine it, touching it. Gim notices and warns her not to, but it is too late. Her hand becomes stuck within the ornament, while pillars of stone come out of the wall. The platform she is standing on sinks lower and lower. Pern runs to save her only to be dragged down with her. The others run over too late to save them.

At another castle in Vallis, a king stands on a balcony, staring across the land. He drifts back in his memory to a few days past. Flashback scene: King Fawn understands the quest that Pern is journeying for and asks why. Pern explains that he has to go to Wart who is the only person who knows the cause for the earths's trembling and about Karla. Also, he adds that since the enemy has advanced that Fawn should defend Vallis, putting his men to guard the area. After his speech, Fawn notices the armour that Pern wears and inquires. But before he can say anything more, Pern explains to him that the armour used to belong to a knight who once served the king and is worn in memory of his father. Back to the present: Another man, Kashew, walks up to Fawn, calling out his name. He recommends Pern as an exceptional young man. Fawn then explains to him his thoughts of meeting Pern; that he would never have gone to see him because of what happened to Pern's father, Tetheus. He then wishes Pern a safe journey and return.

Within an old, unused, decayed room of the Great Dwarves' Tunnel, Pern and Deedrit are safe. Pern wants to get out and go find the others, but he notices a piece of mural on the floor and looks up. Deedrit then casts a spell of light which ascends to the ceiling lighting, shining light onto the mural. Pern wonders what it is, but Deedrit explains it to him. She explains to him that it is a mural depicting the war of the gods, summarizing what had happened as she had heard of it. As soon as she finishes, the light fades. Pern wonders about the battle and how unnecessary it was since the gods had so much power. After hearing this from him, Deedrit teases him about what he said, saying that she does not understand humans but likes them that way. The others are in another part of the tunnel. Slayn casts a light spell on his staff. Eto tells them that they have to hurry and rescue Pern and Deedrit. Gim explains to him that Deedrit is with Pern. He checks the wind in the tunnel, explaining to them that Deedrit can use the wind to find her way out. Woodchuck is surprised by Gim's confidence in her whereupon Gim retorts back about humans judgements.

Back within the room, Deedrit stands on a large pedestal, casting a spell by calling the spirit of the wind, Sylph, to help her. She flies upward and floats in the direction of the wind. After she flies for a while in the direction of the wind, she thanks Sylph.

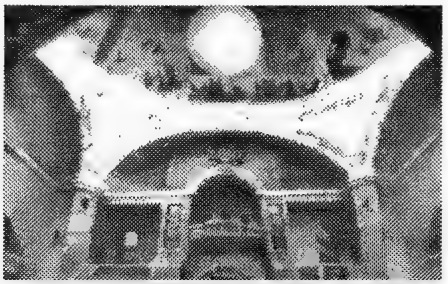
At Wart's castle, Wart and Karla are watching the proceedings in her crystal ball. Wart is disgusted by Karla being the "Grey Witch" and wonders what she is planning. Karla tells him her plan for the party.

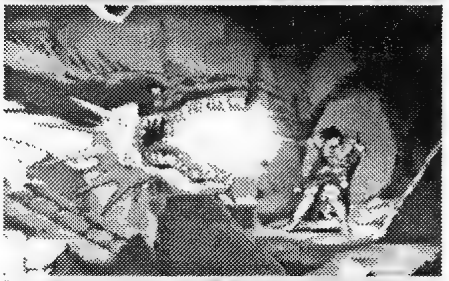
Back within the tunnels, Deedrit leads Pern, but then she stops. At the same moment, Slayn stops.

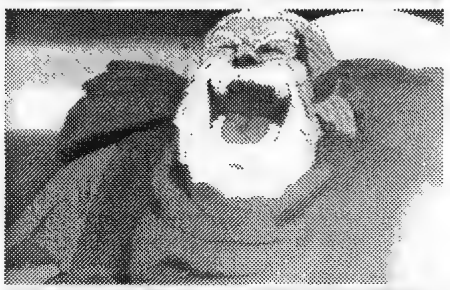
A dragon is awake and starts stomping within a big, decayed room.

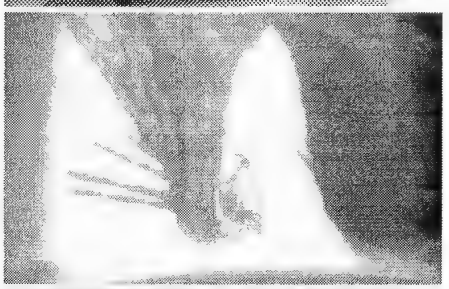
Deedrit and Pern notice. Deedrit tells him to be quiet, but Pern insists that he lead off the dragon. She yells out at him for his stupidity but then realizes her mistake in doing so as the dragon heard her shout.

The dragon pokes its head through the tunnel opening. Pern strikes at it ineffectually. He takes Deedrit and runs out of the tunnel and into the big room, while the dragon follows. They continue running until they are trapped between a wall and the dragon. Looking behind them at the dragon, they see it ready to breath at them. The dragon









rears up and then comes down breathing fire at them. Fortunately, they are protected by Slayn's spell. The dragon then notices the others on the ledge above Pern and Deedrit. But he returns to Pern who attacks uselessly against the dragon. After the dragon completely turned away from the others, its tail sweeps everyone from the ledge except for Gim, who ducks. Slayn is knocked unconscious, and Eto and Woodchuck try to revive him. Woodchuck warns the dragon not to eat them, but Gim makes the statement of attacking the dragon first. Deedrit screams out for Pern who is trying to keep the dragon back. Gim joins in the fray, brandishing his battle axe, telling Deedrit to stay behind. He charges and then slams the battle axe into the dragon's snout. The dragon screams in pain, trying to rid the battle axe from its snout. Gim is still holding on to the battle axe until he can hold on to it no longer and falls to the ground, where Pern and Deedrit check to see if he is all right. Woodchuck takes the opportunity and throws his dirk into the dragon's right eye. The dragon screams in even more pain. Pern takes his chance and drives up his sword through the dragon's throat. The dragon stomps around in its death throes, making the room collapse. Pern and the rest run through a tunnel opening and keep running until they find the exit.

Back at Wart's castle, they watch the six adventurers in the crystal ball. Wart announces to Karla that the six adventurers have foiled her trap, yet Karla tells him to wait awhile. In addition, he talks to her about the occurrences on Lodoss, where she explains her purposes to him. Within the crystal ball, the six adventurers continue walking while Karla looks on.

Episode 2: "Starting off with the Blaze"

Gim walks up the stairs of the Temple of Marfa, wearing a backpack. He enters the temple where a priestess, Neese, kneels down before an altar praying. He tells her that he is going to rescue her daughter Lairia for her, telling her not to worry for him, and then leaves. Inside the temple, Neese stands alone, thinking about Lairia, hoping that Gim can rescue her. The dragon, Bromd, comes next to her, worrying about her.

Within the Zaxxon forest, goblins are running around. They spy a girl bathing with a pond, moving to get a better look. Their movements stir the bushes and scare the girl. The girl, Liara, quickly dresses and runs away from the pond. They chase after her, catching up. Being chased, she screams. Pern who is also in the forest hears her scream and comes running towards her. The goblins keep chasing until they surround her completely. She looks around and sees no possible exits. But then, Pern comes in, wielding a stick. He attacks the goblins, trying to protect the girl who runs away at his order. Now the goblins concentrate on him. Pern fights, even with no experience, but he manages to down some goblins while only being cut once by a pike. He keeps fighting, beating his stick on a goblin's shield until the stick breaks. The goblins take advantage and advance. Without any weapon, Pern dodges and jumps over them, rolling on the ground after he lands while the goblins try to poke at him, and grabbing one of their pikes. One goblin charges with an axe. Pern takes the pike and stabs the goblin through the stomach. The others watch but then run away from the scene as a thrown mace strikes the ground. Pern breathes hard from the exertion. A cleric comes up behind him, talking to him about his body's condition. Pern turns around and recognizes his childhood friend, Eto, who smiles.

Within Pern's home in the country town of Alania which is situated next to Zaxxon forest, Eto bandages Pern's injury and then heals his wound with his clerical spell. He warns Pern to be careful next time. But before he can continue, the door is forcibly opened. Zact and many other men with the girl come barging into Pern's home. Zact accuses Pern for bringing future destruction for their village by attacking the goblins. In the process, he even insults Pern's father. This Pern cannot handle and he argues back. However, before the argument could get any hotter, the mayor interrupts. Zact and another villager within the home tell the mayor of the goblin problem that they will be facing. Yet the mayor tells them that he will deal with the issue later.

Some distance away from the country town of Alania, within the Zaxxon forest, many goblins converge within their cave. They listen to a Marmo-employed goblin who rouses the goblins to fierceness. Within the same country town, Slayn checks a pot of water in the fireplace. He turns around to see Gim through the opened door. Gim comes in. He talks to Slayn about the current status of Lodoss. Slayn wonders why he is at his home. Gim answers that he needs him for the journey at hand. Yet Slayn explains to Gim that his magic is not good enough, that he has to still read his books. Hearing this, Gim becomes disappointed. Opening the door, the mayor interrupts their conversation, asking that Slayn come with him.

Somewhere within the Zaxxon forest, next to a waterfall, Deedrit stands on a rock and then jumps to the waterfall, freshening herself with the coolness of the water. But then, she hears something. She goes to the trees and watches the scene below her from a branch. Upon seeing many goblins wearing armour marching, she wonders what they are doing.

Within his home, Pern sits and stares at the fire within the fireplace, recalling the accusations from the men of the town. He then puts the fire out by throwing a cup of water at it. Afterwards, he enters into a storage room and goes to a chest way in the back of the room, opening it. He sees his father's armour within the chest, touching it. He thinks back to the time when he was young. Flashback scene: Pern, as a little boy, holds his father's sword in his arms. Seeing this, his father smiles and pets his head which makes Pern laugh. He then takes the sword and buckles it to his waist. Then, he leaves, walking away, as little Pern looks on proudly at his father, but this is the last time he sees him. Present scene: He takes out the sword and pulls out the sword a little from the scabbard, staring at it, and then puts it back in. Eto interrupts his thoughts, asking Pern if he can accompany him. Pern refuses Eto because he is a cleric, yet Eto explains that he can heal and he needs practice for his ability especially after combat. Without arguing, Pern agrees. Outside of the goblin's cave, Pern and Eto watch the two guards standing beside the opening from above on a ledge. They nod to each other and then Eto throws a rock to distract the goblins. The goblins move out of their positions to investigate. Taking their chance, Pern and Eto jump down and attack the two goblins, knocking them out. They enter the cave to see no one there. But then they hear a voice outside which calls to them. They exit the cave and look around for the voice, but all they find is the wind blowing around them. Deedrit reveals herself and Eto notices her racial features. And then, Pern realizes where the goblins have all gone.

At the country town, goblins start attacking the people, killing everybody within sight. They enter through houses, killing, giving no mercy to any humans. Some people try to defend themselves only to be killed. Bodies lie strewn all over the town. Pern and Eto run back from the forest.

More and more people are killed by the goblins as the leader watches from above on a house roof, smiling at the situation.

A few goblins advance on a woman and her baby child. The woman draws back in fear, while they continue their advance. But a battle axe flies through the air, killing those few goblins, and Gim jumps up to retrieve it, landing next to Slayn. The goblins' bodies fall to the ground. After seeing this, other goblins come after them. Gim prepares himself for another fight, but Slayn holds him back. He begins to chant a spell. The goblins' bodies succumb to the spell's power until they all fall to the ground. After he casts the spell, he becomes exhausted, and Gim worries about him.

The mayor calls out for his daughter, Liara, who runs between two houses, trying to escape the goblins. The leader sees her and jumps down in front of her, ready to kill her. But Pern rushes toward her and pushes her out of the way before the goblin leader can touch her with his weapon. Pern tells her to run away, which she does. After she leaves, he confronts the goblin leader with his father's sword. He fights, dueling.

Liara comes running up to her father whom she finds with Gim and Slayn. She tells him to help Pern.

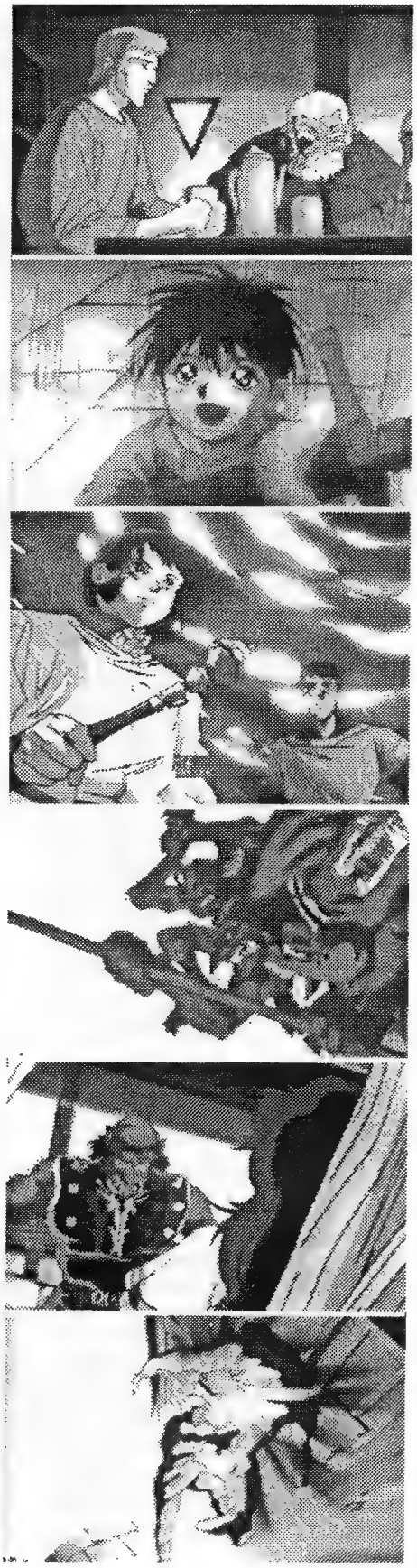
Pern and the goblin leader are still fighting, and the goblin leader swings his sword berserkly and slashes at Pern who cannot parry in time. Pern finally takes an advantage and jumps toward the chieftain, swinging the sword but getting nowhere. The goblin easily pushes him back. Pern lands next to a water well, stunned. Slayn watches and then casts a spell, telling him to take up the sword. The staff begins to glow brightly, and then Pern's sword starts to glow which blinds the goblin leader, making him shield his eyes. Taking his opportunity, Pern gets up and stabs the goblin through the chest, killing it. As Pern pulls the sword away from the body, he breathes heavily, exhausted from the fight, not being able to believe that he won. After his spell, Slayn also becomes weak.

Some time during the night, the villagers gather around to have a meeting and they demand to the mayor that he punish Pern for bringing destruction onto the village. The mayor hears no more of it since he believes that Pern did a lot to save the village and help his daughter. Therefore, he wants him to marry his daughter who is happy at her father's suggestion.

Inside of his house, Pern suits up in his father's armour, ready to leave. He then stands in front of his house, holding a torch. He throws the torch at the house, creating a blaze. After he sees that the house is burning, he walks away.

He walks into the Zaxxon forest. Eto awaits him there and he speaks to Pern, surprising him by telling him that he is joining. Gim and Slayn also are within the forest and come up to Pern, asking to join also. Above on a tree branch, Deedrit looks down at them in wonder.

Kong Chang



Comments

Record of Lodoss War is one of the most exceptional OVAs from Japan that I have ever seen. It has good animation along with BGM's that will take anyone's breath away. As for the series, there are thirteen episodes altogether and so far only ten have been released. Each is only about thirty minutes long, but they are worth the thirty minutes, since the episodes entice you, keeping you on the edge of your seat. And the two CD's for this OVA are also quite exquisite in such that the BGM made for this OVA is outstandingly sweet and pleasing to the ear, especially when the music is used at the right moment with a particular scene. The lyrics are also just as beautiful as the music with the singer, Sherry, singing the vocals in the opening and ending theme song. This OVA is the first to really make a mark for a new direction in Japanese anime.

Thanks to the magazines *Newtype* and *Anime V*, where I got my information from, helping me to write the article.

K.C.

Kong Chang (aka Anime Kami (on net), or Genma (in club)) is member of Cal-Animage Epsilon (PR), of the Nadia fan club and he is living in the heavens above Lodoss. Of Taiwanese origin, he discovered anime on visit to Taiwan. He is going to University of California, Irvine, schooling in his double major of Economics and Japanese. He is working on more Lodoss War synopses as well as on scripts of Gundam F-91, 3x3 Eyes, Armor Hunter Mellowlink, etc. He can be contacted by E-mail on Internet (kchang@orion.oac.uci.edu) or by surface mail: 120 Kazan, Irvine, CA 92714, USA (but this address is subjected to change).

INVID WAR

Eternity will publish another Robotech comics. This time, it will be INVID WAR by Bill Spangler and Tim Eldred. It will be a 4-issue mini-series. The Robotech Masters have been defeated, but the cost was high. Earth is torn and in ruins. The last thing Earth needs is another alien invasion but that's exactly what it'll get. It should be interesting since this time-line (New Generation) is the most interesting after Macross. B&W. $2.50 US/ $3 Can.

ANIME EXPO 92

This year AnimeCon will be called Anime Expo '92: The International Animation and Manga Exposition. It will be held on July 3rd to July 6th at the Red Lion Hotel, San Jose, California. It is organized by The Society for he Promotion of Japanese Animation, in association with the founders of Cal-Animage, U.S. Renditions, L.A. Hero and Viz. The guests of honor are Haruhiko Mikimoto (character designer for MACROSS), Minoru Takanashi (producer for MACROSS II, GUNBUSTER, GUYVER), and Yoshiyuki Tomino (creator of GUNDAM). The american guests are Ben Dunn, Ken Iyadomi (LA Hero), Trish Ledoux & Toshi Yoshida (Animag), Robert Napton & David Riddick (US Renditions), John O'Donnell (US Manga Corps), Fred Schodt, Steve Wang (Guyver director), and Robert Woodhead (AnimEigo). For reservation at the Red Lion Hotel call (408) 453-4000. The room rates are (per night) $62, $69, $75, or $81 (respectively from single to quad occupency). Membership to the Expo is $40 'till June 1st and $45 at the door. Make checks payable to The Society for the Promotion of Japanese Animation. For more information, write to Anime Expo '92, 2425 B Channing, Suite 684, Berkeley, CA 94704, USA.

ROBOTECH AT STREAMLINE

Carl Macek, who produced the ROBOTECH series for Harmony Gold in the mid-1980s, has gotten the video rights to the series for Streamline Pictures as they have expired (Family Home Entertainment and Palladium Books have had the rights previously). Streamline has just released ROBOTECH II: THE SENTINELS on video, in a slightly different version than the previous video release (it has 90 min. instead of 76 min). Their rights to the regular ROBOTECH episodes do not begin until July, and they plan a monthly release series. They are checking into whether it will be possible to put back in some of the scenes that Harmony Gold made him cut out such as the most violent battle scenes and the Linn Minmei shower scenes. (From Fred Patten, Streamline Pictures).

PROJECT A-KON 3

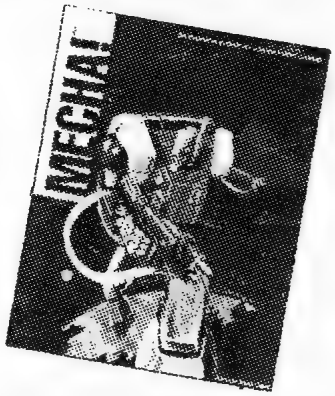
This year, Project A-Kon will be held on June 5-7 at the Holiday Inn Brookhollow in Dallas, Texas. The pre-registration for this 3-day event is $15 ($18 at the door). A room at the hotel is $47 per night ($53.10 with tax). Reserve at Holiday Inn Brookhollow, 7050 Stemmons Frwy (I-35) @ Mockingbird Ln., Dallas, TX 75247, (214) 630-8500 (or 1-800-HOLIDAYS). The guests will be DNA Studio, Tex Henson, Steve Krueger, Ben Dunn, and maybe Jerry Beck, and Ken & Beth Mitcheroney. There will be animations rooms, costumes, art show, gaming, Panels, dealers' room, and party. This is an animation con: it's about both foreign (mostly Japanese) and domestic animation. Be there! To register or for more information, write to: Project A-Kon 3, P.O. Box 515942, Dallas, TX 75251, USA.

CARTOON NETWORK

Ted Turner is launching his fifth cable channel. The CARTOON Network, set for an October debut, will show cartoons around the clock. The new channel will feature cartoons from the Turner Broadcasting System's vast stock of animated shorts, which was boosted by last year's $320-million purchase of the Hanna-Barbera library. The cartoons-only channel joins Turner's TBS Superstation, which runs general entertainment; TNT, which mostly offers vintage films; Cable News Network and CNN Headline News. He also owns Sport-South, a regional network. (From The Gazette, 02-20-92).

The question: is that for real or is it just another project that will never be realized like The Sci-Fi Network? Also, will it show Japanese animation? Anyway, a good news for the US animation fans.

MECHA!



There is a new game for the anime gamers. *Mecha!™* is a fast-paced miniatures combat system that remains true to the Japanese anime giant robot traditions from which it was spawned. Explosions, missiles' exchanges, down and dirty hand-to-hand combat, and lethal firefights are the trademarks of this high-action and easy-to-learn game. The 160-page game-book includes: basic rules (battlepoles, phases, combat, damage, experience, movement), construction rules for mecha and powersuits, two different campaign systems for strategy and role-playing scenario (but they can be easily combined for a "Total Anime Game"!), 23 small scenarios, a sourcebook on the Aztec Empire, and some tips on how to prepare you model kits for the game. It's a very interesting game mixing wargame, models (used as miniatures), and role-playing. Its flexibility allows the players to design their own mecha, create their own setting and background, and play a version of their favorite anime series. The most innovative part of the game is the idea of putting mecha in an Aztec context and the use of poles to give a real tridimentional aspect to the game.

Mecha!™ is now available directly from Seventh Street Games for $25 US, plus tax and Shipping. Battlepoles are sold $25 US by set of 5 (or $7 US each). For shipping add $3.50 plus 50¢ by item. Write to: Seventh Street Games, Orders Department, P.O. Box 720791, San Jose, CA 95172-0791, USA.

ANIMEIGO

AnimEigo announced last January the release dates for their newly licensed OVA series, VAMPIRE PRINCESS MIYU. "Miyu is an unusual blend of traditional Western and Japanese horror stories," said Robert Woodhead, president of AnimEigo. "While it isn't gory or blatantly 'shocky', it slowly and surely delivers the chills." Miyu consists of four 25-minute episodes, and will be released on two 50-minute videotapes and one CLV LaserDisc, in the original Japanese with English subtitles. The three main characters are Miyu, the eternally childlike princess of the vampires; her servant and guardian, the demon Laba; and Himiko, a psychically sensitive "Spiritualist". Miyu is far from the bloodthirsty stereotype we've all become accustomed to; althought her tastes are sanguine, and her motives obscure, she is not overtly evil. As the series progresses, Himiko will hunt Miyu down, oppose her, assist her, and finally discover the secret that binds their destinies together. VAMPIRE PRINCESS MIYU was licensed from Fujisankei Communications Inc. and was originally released in Japan by Pony Canyon Inc. The first tape has a street date of May 3rd (appropriately, a new moon, the darkest night of the month), and the second tape will be released June 18th. Catalog numbers are AT092-004 and -005. It will have a suggested retail price of $39.95 US.

AnimEigo will also release titles on LASERDISC in order to expand into the video collector's market. MIYU will be the first title and AnimEigo is planning to release all future titles on LD as well as tape. They will also re-release on LD the existing catalog. MIYU's LD (Cat. # AD092-001) will be released on July 1st and will retail at $64.95.

AnimEigo will also release the HURRICANE LIVE animated music video concert series. It will consist of two 25-minute Music Video Concerts containing both animated and live-action performances of hit Japanese music, presented in Japanese with English subtitles. Great care has been taken in the translation and subtitling of the songs in order to preserve every nuance of the original lyrics. The first concert, HURRICANE LIVE 2032, will be released July 15th. The second, HURRICANE LIVE 2033 — TINSEL CITY RHAPSODY, will be released October 15th. Both are priced for sell-through at $19.95. Each tape will come packaged in a slip-case containing extensive liner-notes, including both translations and transliterations of the lyrics.

AnimEigo expanded its license rights for BGC from North America to World-wide English-Language. Under the terms of a revised agreement signed with Youmex, Inc., AnimEigo now has the exclusive rights to create and sell English language versions of the hit series in all territories outside of Japan. Consequently, AnimEigo will make PAL (European) format VHS videotapes of the series available for sale worldwide. "Since our subtitled release of the BGC episode last year, we have received many requests from potential customers and distributors outside North America for PAL format tapes", said US Managing Director Janice Hindle. The first episode of BUBBLEGUM CRISIS will be available in PAL format before May. Release in some local market, such as Great Britain, may be delayed while local ratings boards approval is obtained. Each episode will carry a suggested retail price of US$ 39.95. HURRICANE LIVE 2032 & 2033 will be also available in PAL format for $24.95.

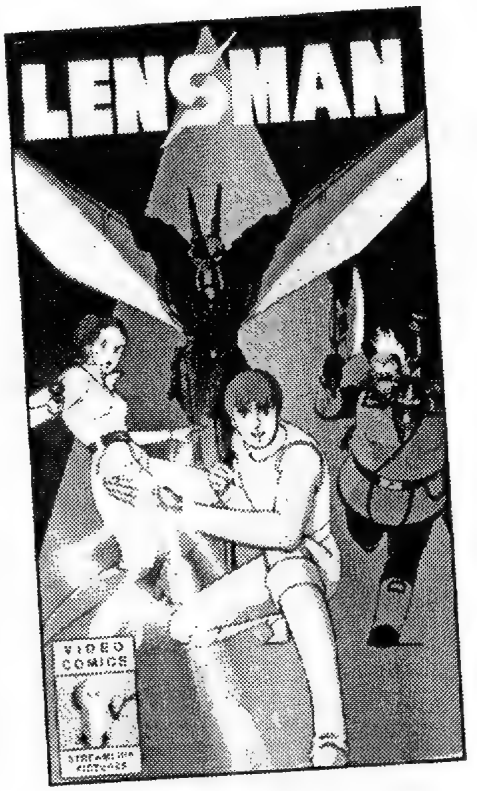
Recently, AnimEigo announced the signing of a license with Toho for a US home video release of the KIMAGURE ORANGE ROAD OVA series and feature film. The package consists of all eight 25-minute OVA, as well as the theatrical film that concludes the series. Targeted at a young adult (18-30) audience, KOR is an outstanding example of a special Japanese genre: the "love comedy". It is the story of a teenage love triangle between a boy, Kyosuke, and two girls, the cool Madoka and the bubbly Hikaru. Hikaru loves Kyosuke, Kyosuke love Madoka, and Madoka... well, Madoka tries not to let her feelings show. What makes ORANGE ROAD so outragous is that Kyosuke and his family are all **cursed** with psychic powers, powers they desperately try to keep hidden from the neighbors. ORANGE ROAD began as a hit TV series, and then continued as the OVA's and the Film. The 8 OVA's are all stand-alone stories, snapshot in the relationship between the three teenagers. They all have one thing in common: they feature an increasingly frazzle Kyosuke juggling two girls and his family secret as things go rapidly from bad to worse. And if his cousin Akane, who has a devious mind and the ability to shapeshift, happens to be visiting, all bets are off! The film is where the love triangle is finally resolved, and Kyosuke discovers that even psychic powers can't heal a broken heart. It's a bittersweet ending to one of Japan's most beloved animation series. The 8 KIMAGURE ORANGE ROAD OVA's will be released on four subtitled VHS tapes, followed by a final tape containing the Film. Tapes will be released monthly starting July 1st. Each tape has a suggested retail price of $39.95. A LaserDisc release is being contemplated.

AnimEigo, founded in 1988, is one of the pioneers of the Japanese Animation market in the U.S. Located in Wilmington, N.C. and Tokyo, Japan, AnimEigo has released more subtitled Japanese Animation than any other company. In 1992, AnimEigo is expanding its release schedule to 2 tapes per month. AnimEigo curently has 28 titles under license, with 10 already released.

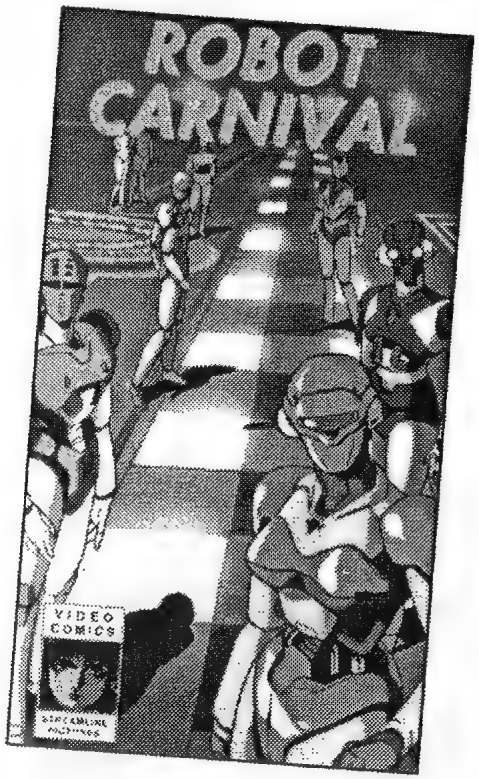
Already in release are MADOX-01, a parody of the "giant robot" genre, RIDING BEAN, a fast-paced action adventure set in modern day Chicago, the first 7 episodes of BUBBLEGUM CRISIS, a slam-bang "cyberpunk" science-fiction series and the first episode of BUBBLEGUM CRASH, the sequel series to BubbleGum Crisis.

STREAMLINE PICTURES

Last December, Streamline Pictures (who had previously released AKIRA, AKIRA PRODUCTION REPORT, and the ZILLION series (5 tapes of 1 episode each)) released two spectacular theatrical Japanese animation features on video tapes. The retail price is $29.95 apiece. Both films are the complete English-language versions produced by Streamline Pictures and are available only in the VHS format with stereophonic sound.



LENSMAN (107 min.) was originally produced in Japan by Kodansha and released in July 1984. Based on the classic science-fiction novels of E. E. "Doc" Smith (1890-1965), this film combines action-packed cartoon animation with state-of-the-art computer graphics. A print of LENSMAN subtitled was premiered to popular acclaim at the 1984 World Science Fiction Convention in Los Angeles, but the movie was not publicly shown again in America until the theatrical release of Streamline's dubbed version in September 1990. LENSMAN was also serialized in comic-book by Tim Eldred and pubished by Eternity Comics.



ROBOT CARNIVAL (90 min.) is an eye-popping collection of eight musical musical animation adventures by nine of Japan's top "anime" talents. Each was given creative freedom to produce a cartoon about ten minutes in lenght; the only stipulation was that each had to deal in some way with robots. The resulting feature has been called "FANTASIA meets HEAVY METAL!" by the ANIMATION MAGAZINE. ROBOT CARNIVAL begins and ends with a surprising sequence by Katsuhiro Otomo, the creator of AKIRA. Other highlights include "Franken's Gear", a robotic update of the Frankenstein story, by Kouji Morimoto; "Presence", a love story between an inventor and his "female" robot, by Yasuomi Umetsu; "Nightmare", a horror story of a modern metropolis taken over by mechanical creatures, by Takashi Nakamura; and "A Tale of Two Robots", a hilarious parody of World War II propaganda cartoons in which a 19th-century-style "evil" American invader and "heroic" Japanese boys battle in steam-powered and battery-cranked giant robots, by Hiroyuki Kitakubo. ROBOT CARNIVAL was produced in Japan by APPP Co., Ltd. in July 1987. Streamline Pictures' English-dubbed version was released theatrically in America in March 1991.

Theatrical releases during 1992 will include a double-bill of MANIE-MANIE and SILENT MOBIUS (which individually are under one hour) and GOLGO 13, dubbed, VAMPIRE HUNTER D in Japanese with English subtitles. They have just released on video WINDARIA and PLANET BUSTERS (features) and the first NADIA episode, which is an on-going series like ZILLION. Other releases will include VAMPIRE HUNTER dubbed into English, NADIA #2 in March, and NADIA monthly thereafter. TWILIGHT OF THE COCKROACHES and THE CASTLE OF CAGLIOSTRO, dubbed into English, should be on video by May and July. They hope to begin the LENSMAN: GALACTIC PATROL TV episodes as monthly video releases late in the year, although these may be delayed if they resume the ZILLION series instead.

U.S. MANGA CORPS

The leading anime supplier in America is bringing more video to us. U.S. Manga Corps has acquired from Toho International Company, Ltd. the North American distribution rights in all media to GALL FORCE. The series began with the theatrical release in 1986 of GALL FORCE: THE ETERNAL STORY. Due to its outstanding critical and commercial success, it was followed by three OVA sequels: DESTRUCTION, STARDUST WAR, and RHEA GALL FORCE. The title refers to the all-female "Gallant Force" space troops, who protect the universe from destruction at the hands of the invading Paranoids. Each of the programs has been released on video in Japan by Sony Music Entertainment (Japan) Inc.., and has landed on the annual Japan Top Five Animation sales charts, as researched by ANIMAGE magazine. The character designs are from Kenichi Sonoda, and it is produced by Artmic, one of the most consistently creative animation think tanks in Japan. Its North American release is scheduled to start in the Spring of 1992.

GALL FORCE: THE ETERNAL STORY (Cat. #1033, 86 min.). In another part of the galaxy, two warring races (the Paranoids and the Solnoids) engage their ultra-technology weapons in mutual annihilation. The story centers on the seven member, all-female crew, the "Gallant Force" of the light assault cruiser STAR LEAF. These women must sacrifice all to save themselves and their partners from the depth of the treachery into which they are thrown! GALL FORCE: DESTRUCTION (Cat #1034, 45 min.). GALL FORCE: STARDUST WAR (Cat #1035, 60 min.). RHEA GALL FORCE (Cat #1036, 60 min.).

USMC also announced that it has acquired from Sony Music Entertainment (Japan) Inc. the North American distribution rights in all media to three animated programs: THE ULTIMATE TEACHER (SAISHYU KYOSHI), WANNA-BE'S, and DOG SOLDIER: SHADOWS OF THE PAST. "Dog Soldiers" was just released in Japan and the two others are already considered classic. All three were quite popular in Japan and that make them of great interest for the North American fans. They are scheduled for release in the Spring of 1992. THE ULTIMATE TEACHER (Cat. #1030, 60 min.). WANNA BE'S (Cat. #1031, 45 Min.). DOG SOLDIERS (Cat. #1032, 45 min.).

US Manga Corps just have a special 800 telephone number for receiving customer credit card orders (800-833-7456 for Visa and Mastercard). This number is not available in Canada. Central Park Media is also producing a monthly newsletter, ANIMAIL, full of details on current and upcoming titles. Watch for it.

U.S. Manga Corps have announced that it has signed a contract with Image Entertainment to release three classic anime titles on laser disc. Starting in Summer, 1992, laser discs will be available for DOMINION and PROJECT A-KO, with GALL FORCE: ETERNAL STORY, to follow in the fall. DOMINION will be released as a four episode, two-disc set, while A-KO and GALL FORCE will be single discs.

U.S. RENDITIONS

U.S. Renditions announced its video release schedule for 1992. In a cooperative venture with the L.A.-based company, L.A. Hero, U.S. Renditions will be releasing the following new titles: GUYVER, ORGUSS, and MACROSS II. In addition, U.S. renditions will continue with its popular DANGAIO series. All new titles will be **dubbed** into English and commercially released for the retail price of $24.95. Only DANGAIO 2 & 3 will be subtitled and released at the original price of $34.95.

GUYVER will feature 6 tapes with two episodes on each tape. The OVA series is based on the manga of the same name and features the exploits of a high school student who accidentally fuses with an alien armor and must battle corporate evil and mutated creatures in Japan. The tentative release schedule is on April 25th (Vol. 1), July 25th (Vol. 2), and October 25th (Vol. 3).

SUPER DIMENSION CENTURY-ORGUSS will feature 12 tapes with three episodes on each tape (35 episodes total). The series was produced by the creators of MACROSS during the golden age of the transformable robot genre. Hal Mikimoto (co-producer of MACROSS) provided all character designs for this series which features characters, mecha, and action in the style of MACROSS, but is a uniquely original series. The tentative release schedule is on April 25th (Vol. 1), July 25th (Vol. 2), and October 25th (Vol. 3).

MACROSS II will feature 3 tapes with two episodes on each tapes (6-episode OVA sequel). MACROSS II is a sequel to the original Japanese MACROSS saga (**not** its U.S. incarnation ROBOTECH). The story is a new generation adventure which picks up years after the original. New characters created by Hal Mikimoto highlight this MACROSS series for the 90s. Familiar elements from the original series appear including the SDF-01 Macross and upgraded versions of the popular Valkyrie mecha. This is one oft he most eagerly anticipated series of the last five years and will usher in a new era of MACROSS adventures. The tentative release schedule for volume 1 is on April 25th (possibly **before** its release in Japan); July 25th (Vol. 2), and October 25th (Vol. 3).

DANGAIO 2 & 3 are separate OVA volumes each featuring one episode. Dangaio 2 features a 10-minute prologue which recounts the action in DANGAIO 1 (featuring new translation). The story centers around four young psychics and their psionic mecha: Dangaio! The tentative release dates are on February 25th (Vol. 2) and March 25th (Vol. 3).

CYBERSUIT ARKADYNE

IANUS publications is proud to present its new COMIC title: CYBERSUIT ARKADYNE by Tim ELDRED and Jonathan JARRARD. ELDRED is already well-known for his strong story-telling and dynamic style full of action. He has published several comics such as BROID, SHATTERPOINT, CHASER PLATOON, LENSMAN, and CAPTAIN HARLOCK: DEATH-SHADOW RISING. Jonathan JARRARD, as technical writer and futurist, give an authentic level of technology to the story. It brings a lot of realism, particularly to the cybersuit.

CYBERSUIT ARKADYNE is a six-issue monthly comic series. The story contains complex plots and themes, a lot of action, and elements of hard science. In the 21st Century, the mining colony of the asteroid belt are struck by terrorist attacks. To protect the mining vessels against these unknown aggressors, the World Space Cooperative Administration (WSCA) developed the technology of the cybersuit, using cybernetic implants and gravitic drive. This symbiotic link with an almost invincible machine will have severe consequences on the mind of Glenn Taback, the chosen pilot.

"I'd had the original idea for ARKADYNE over five years ago," Eldred said, "and I knew it was going to be something big. It would contain complex plots and themes I could never have successfully pulled off back then... but after two years of producing steady work for Eternity, I know I'm ready for it now." Eldred solicited the assistance of technical writer and futurist Jonathan Jarrard to bring to the story an authentic level of technology. "John's contribution far surpasses anything I could have come up with in terms of hard science," Eldred continued. "The workings behind the Cybersuit in particular are incredible. This thing could really exist in another few decades and put to shame anyone who's ever laughed at the concept of a giant robot; this is the real stuff." "The way the comics market is these days," Eldred concluded, "you can't count on seeing this book if you don't place an order with your local comics retailer in early January. This is vital to the future of the series, so please make a point to ask for it, or copies will vanish as quickly as full-open gravitic drive!"

CYBERSUIT ARKADYNE by Tim Eldred and Jonathan Jarrard. "Vision", issue 1 (of 6) from IANUS publication available MARCH 1992. It will retail at $2.50 US ($2.95 Can).

VIZ COMICS

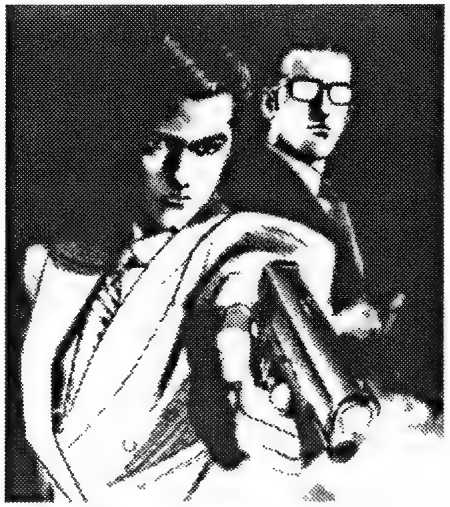
Viz spring line-up is their most ambitious undertaking ever. It will include two of the most popular Manga titles, NAUSICAA Part 3 and CRYING FREEMAN Part 4, as well as the most anticipated titles: RANMA 1/2 and Ryoichi Ikegami's new title, SANCTUARY. There will be also a captivating new mini-series: STRIKER — THE ARMORED WARRIOR.

RANMA 1/2 is the most popular manga/anime today, and the hottest title in demand by American fans! Its animation TV series always has one of the highest ratings on prime-time. Voluminous fan mail asking for RANMA and the continuing high sales of the LUM graphic novels is indicative of Rumiko Takahashi's popularity in the USA. RANMA 1/2 is a clever tale that has everything: humor, romance and karate. The title character, Ranma, is a young boy, most of the time; except when he gets wet. A good dousing turns this hapless lad into the opposite sex, a phenomenon that brings a lot of imbroglio. Story & art by Rumiko Takahashi, adapted in English by Gerard Jones ("The Trouble with Girls"). 7-issue 40-page monthly Color Series starting in MAY. $4.95 US/$6.50 Can.

NAUSICAA OF THE VALLEY OF THE WIND Part 3, considered a masterpiece in Japan and the USA is starting again at last! After a long interval, Miyazaki completed a large portion of the continuing saga. In Part 3, we watch war between the two empires show signs of becoming a real holocaust, and Nausicaä seems destined to be resurrected in the role of a much needed Messiah. Though it doesn't bring us to the ultimate conclusion, it certainly provides the climax everyone has expected. Monthly Black & White, starting in April.

CRYING FREEMAN Part 4, kicking off in March will proceed with no break from Part 3. The new story begins in Los Angeles' Chinatown. Freeman is asked to rescue a kidnapped girl and her family. The real target of the kidnappers, however, is Freeman himself! The story then leads us to the confrontation between Freeman and an international kidnapping organization. Story by Kazuo Koike & art by Ryoichi

Ikegami. 7-issue monthly color series, starting in March. For mature readers. $4.95 US.



SANCTUARY is the latest title by Ryoichi Ikegami, artist of MAI and CRYING FREEMAN. This fascinating story follows two dynamic young men who together try to restructure Japan, one from within the political world, and the other from within organized crime. Asami and Hojo, who in their youth experienced the horror under the Khmer Rouge, are dissatisfied with the materialism of Japanese society. This controversial tale is a brutal dissection of the dark side of Japan. It tackles with the political intrigues and scandals, the social change taking place in contemporary Japan in the hands of the post-baby-boomer generation. Those younger, fresher minds in positions of real power have values and lifestyles so radically different from those of their predecessors that they have been labeled *shinjinrui* ("homo novus"). SANCTUARY is the story of those ambitious young men who take on a system dominated by old, powerful men and characterized by corruption and stagnation. This intense title will also feature Viz's newest format: a hefty 72-80 pages per issue! Story by Sho Fumimura & art by Ryoichi Ikegami. Translation by Matt Thorn. Touch-up art by Mary Kelleher. Monthly black & white series starting March. $4.95 US/ $6.50 Can.

STRIKER — THE ARMORED WARRIOR is a crisp action mini-series. Yu Ominae is a young man made nearly invincible from the dangers of his work by the amazing defensive capacities of his special armored body-suit — a high-tech alloy marvel! As special agent for an archaeology institute, Ominae must protect any unearthed secrets that prove threatening to the world. In this mini-series, a revelation involving the legendary Noah's Ark must be defended from a youthful ESPer, brillant but ruthlessly greedy. STRIKER, a four-issue black & white mini-series priced at an economical $2.75 per issue. Starting in April.

Viz is also to begin a new format printed in USA. Most of their titles will now be 32-page, stitchbound, black & white, and will retail around $2.50/$2.75. They will also be printed in USA. This change is motivated by the unpredictability of the currency exchange rate, by the difficulty that oversea printing imposes to deadlines, by the will to help redress the trade imbalance between Japan & USA, and finally to respond to fans request for lower prices and black & white comics. STRIKER will begin in the new format. CRYING FREEMAN Part IV (becoming an 8-issue series) and SANCTUARY (still 72-80 pages retailing at $4.95) will switch to the new format with their issue #4 (June). Viz's new Summer/Fall titles (MACROSS II, SILENT MOBIUS Part III, and RUSTY ANGEL) will also be released in this format. RANMA 1/2 alone will remain 40-48 pages, all color and in squarebound format. The graphic novels will remain indefinitely printed in Japan. These changes in format and printing location will allow Viz to publish more titles each month, more quickly and with a less expensive retail price.

MANGACTUALITY

The expected manga, manga-like and anime products for March, April, and May:

Antarctic Press: Albedo #4, Girls of Ninja High School, Furrlough #3, Mangazine #14-15, Mighty Tiny: The Mouse Marines GN.

Dark Horse: The Venus Wars #12-14, Outlanders #0, Outlanders #1 (relist).

Eternity: The Complete Robotech Handbook, Robotech II: The Sentinels — Swimsuit Spectacular #1, Robotech II: The Sentinels II #13, Robotech: Genesis #2-3, Ninja High School #33-34, Robotech: Invid War #1.

Epic: Akira #35-36, Akira TPB #4-5.

Ianus: Cybersuit Arkadyne #1-3; Mecha Press #1-3; Protoculture Addicts #17-18, PA #14 (relist), Poster-Zine #1 (relist).

Mangajin #15-17.

Viz: Sanctuary #1-3, Crying Freeman IV #1-3, Ranma 1/2 #1, Silent Mobius II #4-5, Shades of Death Part 2-3, Striker: The Armoured Warrior #1-2.

Japanese Magazines: Animage, Animedia, Anime V, B-Club, Hobby Japan, Model Graphix, NewType.

Books Nippan: La Mémoire de Nadia (Newtype Collection, 82 pgs, $30 can), Katsuhiro Otomo Anthology (256 pgs, $24.50 Can), Five Star Stories IV "Traffic Edition" (Newtype 100% comics, 191 pgs, $23.25 Can), Gundam F-90 (Bandai B-Club Comic, 103 pgs, $24.50 Can), AD Police (B-Club Comic (Hard SF Version), 160 pgs, $22.50 Can), Silent Mobius #4 (Manga, 195 pgs, $23.75 Can), Lupin III #1-2 (Original Manga Collection, 822/837 pgs, $30.95 Can ea.), Eight Man #1-6 (manga 217-298 pgs, $22.75 Can ea.), Vaelber Saga #1 (manga, 183 pgs, $23.50 Can), Dragon Wars (Manga, 289 pgs, $22.95 Can).

NEW LASER DISCS

Title	Cat. #	Release date	¥ Price
Here is Greenwood II	VILF-13	3/4/92	7,800
3x3 Eyes IV	BEAL-484	3/19/92	4,800
Joker	N/A	4/21/92	7,800
Macross II Vol. I	BEAL-404	5/21/92	4,800
Ranma 1/2: The Movie	PCLA-00011	4/17/92	9,800
Gundam 0083 Vol. 7	BEAL-427	2/20/92	4,800
Gundam 0083 Vol. 8	BEAL-428	3/19/92	4,800
Gundam 0083 Vol. 9	BEAL-429	4/23/92	4,800
Patlabor P-14	VPLY-70146	3/5/92	7,800
Patlabor P-15	VPLY-70147	N/A	7,800
Sequence	TYLY-1036	3/18/92	9,800
Genesis Surviver Gaiarth	TOVA-1113	N/A	9,800
Ninja Ryukenden	MSL-02	3/21/92	6,695

(Information taken from ANIME V, ANIMEDIA, & NEWTYPE; provided by **Laser Media**)

ANIME IN USA

Titles	Company	Type	Price	Date
Lensman	SP	Dub	$29.95	15/12/91
Robot Carnival	SP	Dub	$29.95	15/12/91
Gunbuster III	USR	Sub	$34.95	12/19/91
Black Magic M-66	USR	Sub	$34.95	12/31/91
Project A-Ko	USMC	Sub	$39.95	1/22
BGC 5: Moonlight Rambler	AnimEigo	Sub	$34.95	1/3
Windaria	SP	Dub	$29.95	February
Planet Busters	SP	Dub	$29.95	February
Nadia 1	SP	Dub	$14.95	February
Robotech II: Sentinels (90min)	SP	Dub	$24.95	February
Robotech: Southern Cross 4	PB	Dub	$29.95	February
BGC 6: Red Eyes	AnimEigo	Sub	$34.95	2/1
Dominion II	USMC	Sub	$34.95	2/12
BubbleGum Crash 1	AnimEigo	Sub	$34.95	2/15
Dangaio 2	USR	Sub	$34.95	2/25
Nadia 2	SP	Dub	$14.95	March
Twilight of Cockroaches (LD)	SP	Sub	$34.95	March
Vampire Hunter D	SP	Dub	$29.95	March
Robotech: Southern Cross 5	PB	Dub	$29.95	March
BGC 7: Double Vision	AnimEigo	Sub	$34.95	3/1
The Humanoid	USMC	Sub	$34.95	3/18
Dangaio 3	USR	Sub	$34.95	3/25
BubbleGum Crash 2	AnimEigo	Sub	$34.95	3/25
Gall Force: Eternal Story	USMC	Sub	TBA	Spring
The Ultimate teacher	USMC	Sub	TBA	Spring
Wanna Be's	USMC	Sub	TBA	Spring
Nadia 3	SP	Dub	$14.95	April
Robotech: Southern Cross 6	PB	Dub	$29.95	April
BGC 8: Scoop Chase	AnimEigo	Sub	$34.95	4/10
Dominion III	USMC	Sub	$34.95	4/15
Orguss 1	USR	Dub	$24.95	4/25
Guyver 1	USR	Dub	$24.95	4/25
Macross II 1	USR	Dub	$24.95	4/25
BubbleGum Crash 3	AnimEigo	Sub	$34.95	4/29
Twilight of the Cockroaches	SP	Dub	$29.95	May
Nadia 4	SP	Dub	$14.95	May
Robotech: Southern Cross 7	PB	Dub	$29.95	May
Vampire Princess Miyu 1	AnimEigo	Sub	$39.95	5/3
Dog Soldier	USMC	Sub	$34.95	5/20
Nadia 5	SP	Dub	$14.95	June
Dominion IV	USMC	Sub	$34.95	6/17
Vampire Princess Miyu 2	AnimEigo	Sub	$39.95	6/18
Dominion I (LD)	USMC	Sub	TBA	Summer
Project A-Ko (LD)	USMC	Sub	TBA	Summer
Gall Force: Eternal Story (LD)	USMC	Sub	TBA	Summer
Nadia 6	SP	Dub	$14.95	July
Lupin 3: Cagliostro Castle	SP	Dub	TBA	July
Robotech: Southern Cross 8	PB	Dub	$29.95	July
Kimagure Orange Road 1	AnimEigo	Sub	$39.95	7/1
Vampire Princess Miyu (LD)	AnimEigo	Sub	$64.95	7/1
Hurricane Live 2032	AnimEigo	Sub	$19.95	7/15
Guyver 2	USR	Dub	$24.95	7/25
Orguss 2	USR	Dub	$24.95	7/25
Macross II 2	USR	Dub	$24.95	7/25
Nadia 7	SP	Dub	$14.95	Aug
Kimagure Orange Road 2	AnimEigo	Sub	$39.95	8/1
Nadia 8	SP	Dub	$14.95	Sept
Kimagure Orange Road 3	AnimEigo	Sub	$39.95	9/1
Nadia 9	SP	Dub	$14.95	Oct
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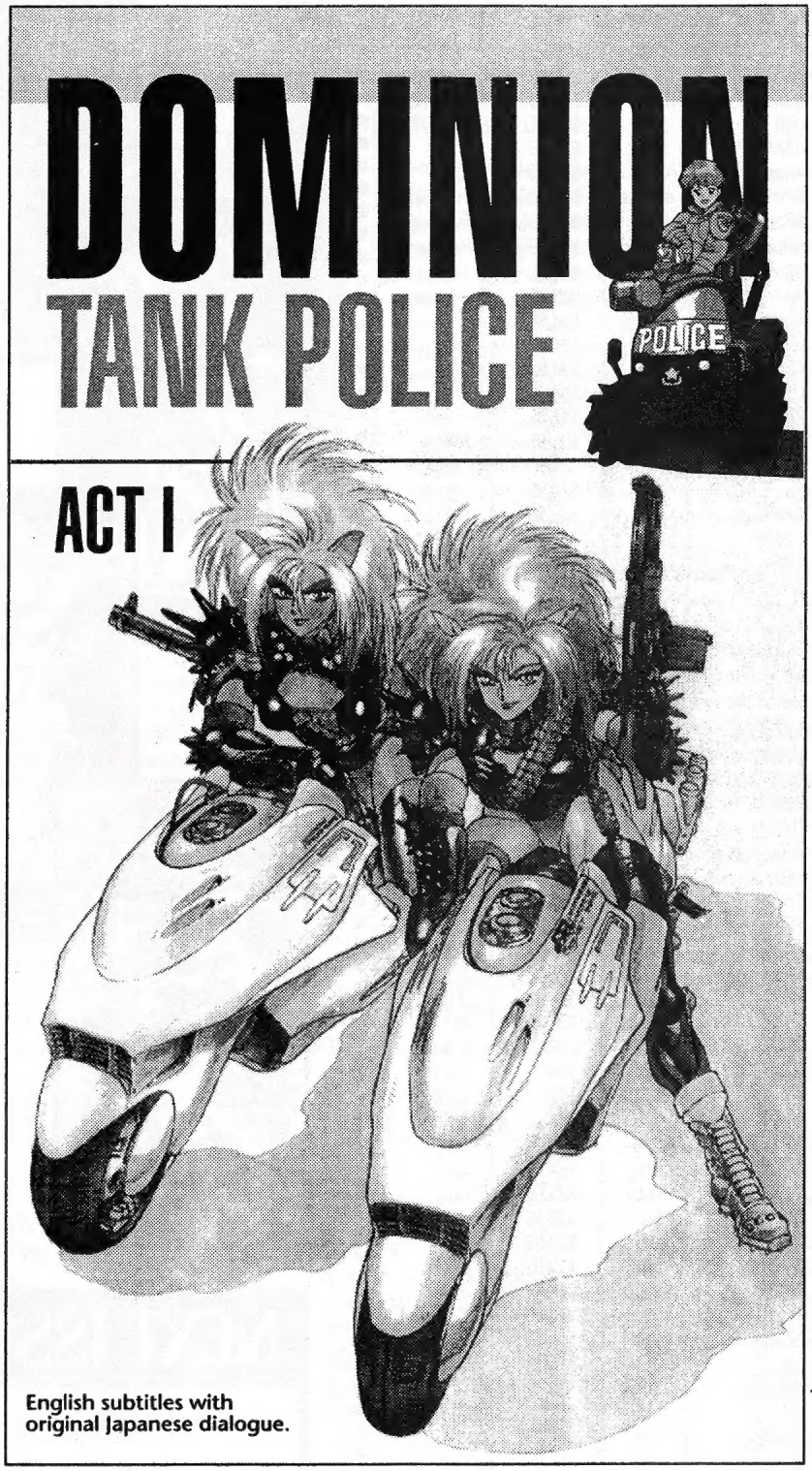

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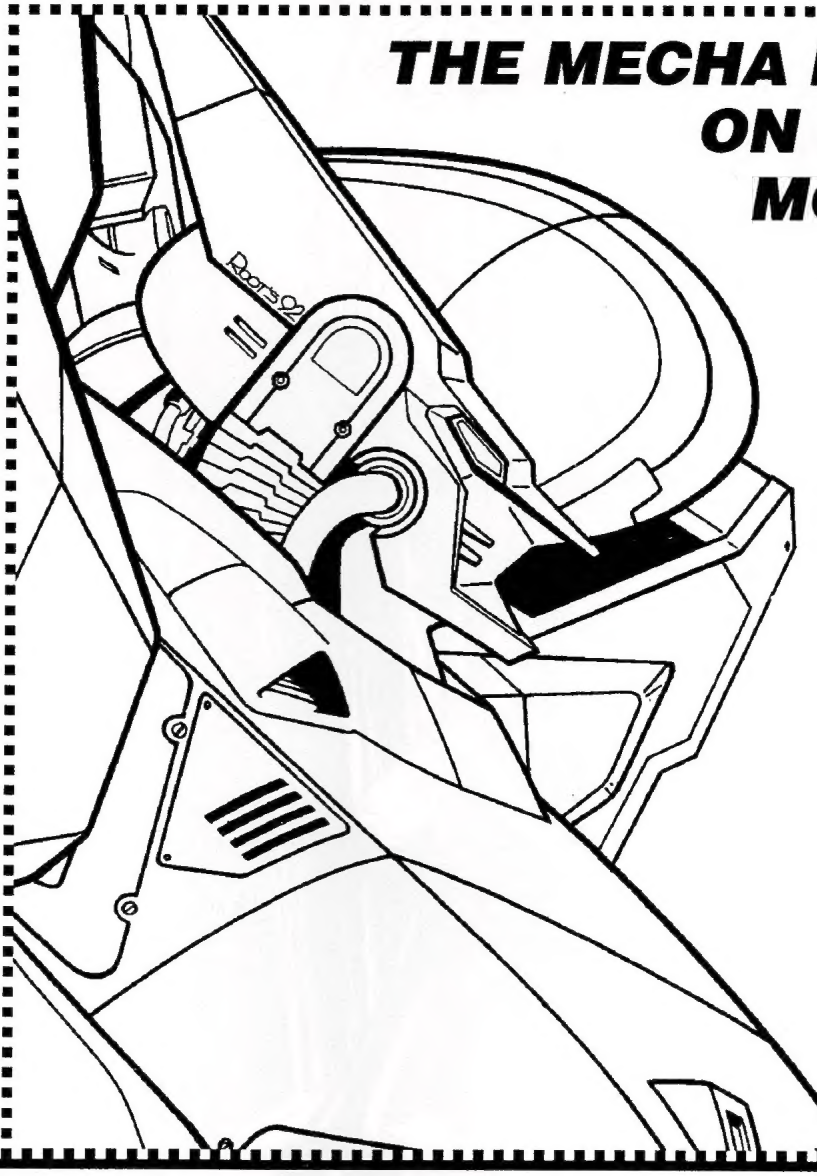

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